January/February 1998 £1

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Making Jesus Known

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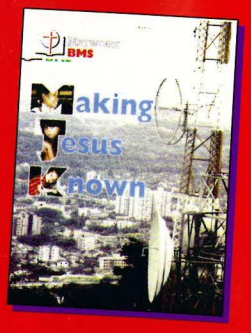
BMS is making Jesus known. Are you?



Making Jesus Known is a professionally produced video which shows people how BMS is preparing to take the gospel into all the world in the 21st century.

It comes in six parts, each between seven and 13 minutes long, with a study guide.

It's suitable for showing both in homes or in church meetings.

No church or Christian fellowship group should be without one. **So order your copy now.**

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Please send me a copy of the Making Jesus Known video, and free study guide at a cost of £9.95 plus £1.50 p&p, making a total of £11.45.

❑ I enclose a cheque for this amount, made payable to Baptist Missionary Society

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If you need more information telephone Rob Vaines, Resources Assistant on 01235 512077. Registered Charity No. 233782

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THIS ISSUE
JUSTICE AND PEACE

Jan Kendall

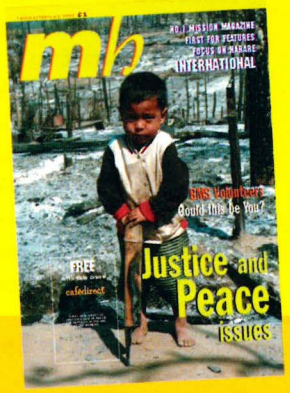
It's good every now and again to stand still and take stock of where we're at in our lives. New year is a natural time to do this, with an old year ending, and a new one beginning. I always get really excited when I think of all the "new things" that God has planned and is wanting to do in our lives - individually and corporately.

mb takes on a new look along with the new year, and I hope you like it. We've expanded world news, and changed Take Two so that it is easier for you to cut out and keep. The Action Team page will now include features on other BMS volunteers as well, and kicks off with a profile of the new BMS Volunteer Co-ordinator, Carolyn Cole. We also welcome Philip Clements-Jewery and Gerry Myhill to the team of contributors.

This time we focus on justice and peace issues - serious, sobering, and sometimes we can feel submerged because of the enormousness of the situation, and the task that faces us. But, as they say, (with apologies to vegetarians) "the best way to eat an elephant is in small chunks" - everything is manageable if we break it down to bite size pieces. As I write the Scottish BU Assembly has just voted to boycott all Nestlé products because they do not follow the ethical international code in the marketing of breast milk substitutes. This is not a new campaign, but it needs sustained support. We can all take part in a large or small way, and to help you make a start, put away your Nescafé, and have a cup of fairly traded Cafédirect coffee on us.

May our missionary God bless you and lead you further in his will in 1998

Jan



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THE CHALLENGE OF URBAN MISSION

Poland

Poznan, Poland's Second Baptist Church rededicated its chapel building at the end of last year after overcoming many seemingly impossible barriers. No church service had taken place in the main sanctuary since 1945 and it seemed that the dilapidated structure was doomed to become a fitness centre or discotheque. But its pastor Piotr Ozana scattered 1,600 letters to interested people on the Internet, and the purchase price was raised several days before the deadline. (EBPS)

Mongolia

Physically handicapped children are being given their first chance to have an education thanks to the efforts of a 62-year old American grandmother. She has worked alongside doctors in the capital Ulaan Baatar and helped develop a pilot programme for 15 children who had never previously been inside a school. This is a joint project between the local government and a consortium of Christian Ministries working in Mongolia where overt evangelism is prohibited. (YWAM News)

El Salvador

According to a study published by the Jesuit University in San Salvador, El Salvador has become the most violent country in Latin America. More than 150,000 San Salvador residents - 20 per cent of the capital's adult population of 765,000 - have been victims of armed robbery, within the past year. (LAP)

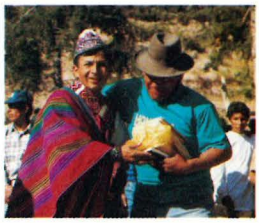
Romanies

Printing of a complete Bible in the Romani (Gypsy) language will begin in 1998, following the first printing of a Romani New Testament in 1995. It was decided to go ahead with this as the initial printing of 3,300 copies of the New Testament had begun to run low. The text comes from the only surviving copy of a Romani Old Testament housed in the library of Cambridge University. (EBPS)

News in Brief

News

Peru Quecha Christians Graduate in Bible Training



Last autumn at the largest ever gathering of Quecha Christians in the history of Peru, a special ceremony was held to mark the end of a special training series. Seventy eager participants stepped forward to receive their graduation gift - a bundle of training materials including a Bible dictionary, concordance, systematic theology studies and a book on church history. After the gathering was over, they travelled to their homes scattered across the Peruvian Andes, equipped to disciple Christians in their home towns and villages.

During the week's training, which was conducted by Open Doors, there were a number of seminars in the Quecha language, teaching the participants how to study the Bible for themselves. Additional studies included foundations of doctrine and church unity.

The timing of the gathering also marked the anniversary of the tragic killing five years ago of a prominent Quechan evangelist, Romulo Saune, who was gunned down by Shining Path guerillas, together with three other Christian workers. This date now marks a time when Quechan Christians gather from all over Peru, giving testimony to a faith that cannot be extinguished.

At the end of the ceremonies an invitation was given to all those who wanted a copy of the Bible in their Quecha language. Over 700 people lined up to receive the Open Doors sponsored Bibles. (Open Doors)

Over 700 people lined up to receive the Open Doors sponsored Bibles.

Scotland Message of Hope for Inner City Kids

An innovative "mobile church" programme is taking the message of Jesus to children in high risk inner city areas.

A specially converted lorry takes PlayPeace Church to Elder Park in the Govan district of Glasgow every Wednesday evening for an hour and a quarter of open air music, games and Christian teaching for local children.

With widespread drug abuse reported among young

Scots - fuelled by high levels of unemployment - drug prevention features strongly.

"The needs in some Scottish urban areas are immense," said Andy Kennedy, leader of Youth With A Mission's King's Kids ministry in Scotland and one of the originators of the programme. "Many young people feel they have no future or stake in the society in which they live. Drugs are a growing problem. Our view is that it's no use spending lots of money on prevention work with youth without first having a preventative strategy to reach and train children in their pre-teen years."

"The needs in some Scottish urban areas are immense,"

Up to 100 five - 12 year-olds attend the weekly sessions which are staged in front of watching local residents and curious passers-by.

"The street is what many of these kids are familiar with - it's where they live, play, learn, and it's the closest any of them will ever come to stepping inside a regular church," explains Kennedy.

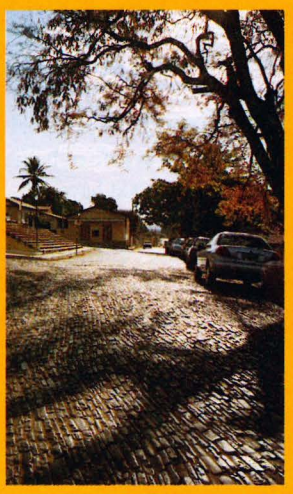
PlayPeace is a partnership between King's Kids, the city's Queen's Park Baptist Church, and the local Teen Challenge centre, and takes its name from the traditional Scottish "play piece", a sandwich children took to school to eat during their "play time" break from classes. "It reminds us that the Bible tells us that Jesus is not only our peace, but also the bread of life," said Kennedy. (YWAM News)

Alistair Brown

Slavery then and now

Sun glints through the tree, a dark shadow falling onto a cobbled road. This is Pirenopolis, a small town in Goias, right in the interior of Brazil. Many visitors walk its cobbled streets.

I felt almost guilty walking there, because every small cobble stone was hammered into place by a slave. Teams of them on their knees built those roads in baking heat. My imagination pictures the poor conditions and demanding masters.



That was only a little over a hundred years ago, for Brazil was late to abolish slavery. Today Pirenopolis is rife with spiritism. Though Christians in Brazil are amongst the most evangelistic in the world, there's little Christian presence in Pirenopolis. It's unreached. Like so many places, it's still in the grip of slavery as terrible as any in its history. May God help his people end that soon. ●

India Computer Classes Opens Doors for High Castes

Computer classes for high caste Hindus in the city of Madras are helping to build bridges with people who typically want to have nothing to do with Christianity.

The classes are run by Youth With A Mission in a part of the city with the largest population of Brahmins - Hindus who largely dismiss Christianity because they associate it with the country's lower, despised classes.

Up to 12 students can enrol at any time, and they are given three special tracts explaining more about the gospel, and offered a free New Testament if they want to study further. Instructors and teachers also talk about their faith during the two and three month courses.

"Many have acknowledged that Jesus Christ is the only true God, but have held back from following him, due to the cost that they would have to pay to do so," said Dr Alex Harris, the Indian director who founded the programme a year ago.

He chose the Mylapore area of Madras because it had few Christians, despite being the place, according to tradition, where St Thomas began his ministry in the early years of the Church.

The computer training is advertised locally and welcomed by the Brahmins, many of whom find it hard to find places in colleges or work because of government-regulated reservation systems implemented to help the lower castes.

Students from teenagers to 60 year-olds are taught the latest software and Internet programs, and receive a certificate at the end of their time. Some have gone on to find work with small firms.

"There are many different people groups in India, each needing a different strategy to reach them," said YWAM's Madras director, Tim Svoboda. "For the Brahmins in Madras, we believe that providing this kind of technological training is the best way of building friendships and establishing relationships." (YWAM News)

Ukraine Gospel Reaches Millions in Crusade

Thousands of people made decisions to accept Christ as Saviour at a three-night crusade in Kiev and a week-long evangelistic effort led by American evangelist Jim Ponder.

The services were broadcast on the Ukraine National Television Network to an audience estimated to number 52 million in Ukraine plus five regions of Russia.

The president of the Union of Evangelical Christian Baptists (UECB) in Ukraine described the crusade as "the greatest religious meeting in the history of the Ukraine. Millions of people have heard the gospel for the first time and thousands have received Jesus."

The crusade and personal witnessing efforts during the week led to 8,417 professions of faith, according to the UECB plus more than 10,000 letters received in response to the broadcasts.

Sergio Karpenko, vice-president of the Union and co-ordinator for the crusade, pointed out, "to understand the real significance of the response by mail, you must understand first that postage is very high and stationery is almost impossible to secure and that Ukrainian people, conditioned by 70 years of communism and interception of letters by the KGB, do not easily decide to write such letters."

With that level of initial response, "it is safe to believe that about 30,000 have received Jesus," Karpenko wrote, adding "attendance in churches across Ukraine in these few weeks has risen dramatically."

The crusade was one in a series of regional Capital Crusades carried out by Jim Ponder Ministries in partnership with the Ukrainian Baptist Union. The crusades are undertaken in co-operation with the Southern Baptist International Mission Board (USA) and the Fellowship of Baptist World Ministries. (EBPS)

Dates for your Diary

Events & Meetings

Leicestershire
Sat 3 January
Leicester Auxiliary New Year Prayer Meeting
North Evington Free Church, Leicestershire
More information - Theo Lambourne 0116 271 3633

Nottingham
Mon 5 January
Nottingham E Group BMS meeting
Whitemoor Baptist Church, Nottingham
More information - Rhoda Ridal 0115 928 4922

Cambridge
Tues 6 January
Cambridgeshire Baptist Missionary Fellowship New Year Prayer Meeting
Mill Road Baptist Church, Cambridge
More information - Sheila Bull 01954 231404

Glasgow
Mon 12 January
Womens Missionary Fellowship
Adelaide Place Baptist Church, Glasgow
More information - Jan Watson 0141 882 1201

Luton
Sat 7/ Sun 8 February
BMS President visits Luton
More information - Gerald Hemp 01582 564701

Glasgow
Mon 9 February
Womens Missionary Fellowship
Adelaide Place Baptist Church, Glasgow
More information - Jan Watson 0141 882 1201

Leicester
Sat 21 February
Leicester Auxiliary Celebration Praise
Central Baptist Church, Leicester
More information - Theo Lambourne 0116 271 3633

World Ex-Freedom Fighter Encourages Others to Pray

The testimony of a one-time member of the Lebanese Christian militia is being featured in a prayer guide for the sixth annual 30 Days Muslim Prayer Focus, which begins on New Year's Day, parallel to Ramadan.

Organisers hope the testimony of this converted soldier will inspire many to take part in the month-long prayer event, which is expected to draw up to ten million participants around the world.

The ex-freedom fighter grew up during the long-running civil war that devastated Lebanon, a time in which he was taught to use guns and "saw severed hands and ears that were brought back ... as trophies of war." At 17, following the death of his sister, he officially joined the militia, but turned to heroin to deal with the pressures.

LEBANESE SOLDIERS SUPPLIED BY ASSOCIATED PRESS

Then he met a "real Christian", and visited a church where "the people welcomed me like an old friend. It was my first experience in seeing Christians who loved each other and lived according to the Bible. I prayed and cried and forgave the people who had killed my sister and other relatives. I felt the love of Jesus overwhelming me..."

The story introduces readers to the new prayer guide, some 500,000 copies of which have been printed in 31 languages, with the newest translations being available in Spanish and Kazak. There is also a special children's edition for six-to-ten-year-olds. (YWAM News)

Inspiration, motivation, ideas, news on world mission for churches

World Mission Link

Take the Risk

A challenging and fast moving evening featuring BMS President Martin Pearse, tackling important world mission issues, presented through drama, music, multimedia presentations, video and live phone links from around the world.

Take the Risk is for 20s - 30s in 16 venues throughout the UK during 1998.

Risk it and ring!

Wed 4 - Sat 7 March
Leeds, Newcastle, Edinburgh, Glasgow

Wed 25 - Sat 28 March
Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Nottingham

Wed 6 - Sat 9 May
Southampton, Exeter, Cardiff, Bristol/Cheltenham

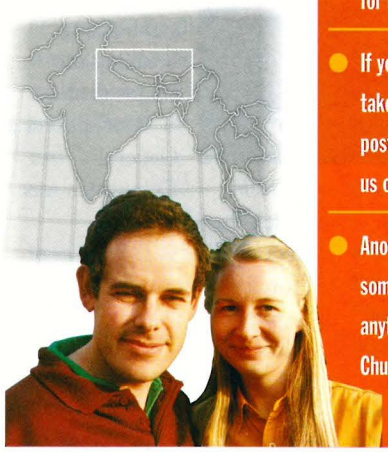
Wed 13 - Sat 16 May
Cambridge, Luton, London NE, London S

For more details contact your BMS Co-ordinator, or ring Katrina Dando at BMS on 01235 512077.

Letter from Nepal

Ben and Carolin Keenan spent a year as Barnabas Project Volunteers in Nepal. They worked with the INF in the Primary Studies Centre in Pokhara.

Here are some thoughts they had about things you can do to help and encourage those in God's service away from your fellowship:



Ideas to help you give Encouragement

- Christmas and Birthdays are important - send a card and a small present. Ask what they are particularly missing. Chances are that once in a while it can easily be sent by post as a very special treat. (In our case it was Angel Delight, Cheese Sauces and Custard!) To find something in your post box is always exciting, but to find a small parcel is something to go wild about!
- Prayers for health and safety are never wasted. Every time you think of the person, send up a short prayer for these things. We were in one or two rather serious scrapes through the year and needed protecting angels. It was an encouragement to us to know that we had so many people supporting us in prayer.
  The young people of our church were particularly faithful - they even phoned us at lunch time at school in Pokhara (around 7.00 am in the UK) to ask us what they could pray for! It was also great for us to be adopted by a housegroup, and sometimes we sent them special prayer requests.
- If you don't have time to write a letter, send a postcard. They are just as great to receive, don't take a moment to write, and have the added bonus of a picture of home! (We had half a door full of postcards. Our favourites were of Dartmoor and of the sea. We'd stand and look at them to remind us of what home was like.)
- Another idea is for the church-link-person to regularly hand out a pre-addressed aerogramme to someone in the church. You can share the writing of this with others. You don't have to write about anything special - when you're away you like to hear about everyday life. It allows you to feel part of Church life enabling you to pray for people at home.

Round and about

Lee Mount Baptist Church Halifax used the BMS/Op Agri 'Skills to Survive' material. They donated products of their skills, and these were then auctioned. They raised £ 373.

First BMS missionaries for Croatia

Reuben and Katie Martin from Leigh Road Baptist Church, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex will be the first BMS full-time personnel to work in Croatia. BMS has been in partnership with the Baptist Union of Croatia since 1995.

Reuben is in his final year at Spurgeon's College, studying for a theology degree. He also has a BA in Social Policy and Administration from Brighton University, and spent the summer of 1992 in Vellore, India, working in the Christian Medical College Hospital.

His wife Katie is a teacher, and she has spent three months with the Oxford Mission in Bangladesh in 1990, and has led a STEP building project to Bolivia with Latin Link.

After completing their time at Spurgeon's College, Reuben and Katie will spend up to six months in 1998 in a UK church. As part of her training Katie will also take a course on Teaching English as a Foreign Language.

Once in Croatia Reuben and Katie will be involved in pastoral work.

Your Giving (for a twelve month period, as at the end of October 1997):

Arise and Build! Project 96
£ 21,981

PROJECT 97 a piece of the ACTION
Project 97 A piece of the Action
£ 10,119

Lights Camera Action (Youth project)
£267

Children's Project: Globetrotter
£1,178

Relief Fund - Compassion in Action
£91,193

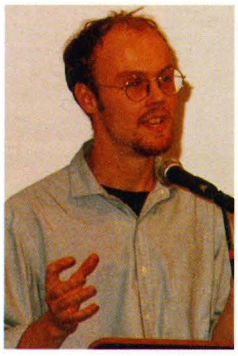
News in Brief

News

October 1997 General Committee News...

Jubilee 2000

Members of General Committee were urged to support the Jubilee 2000 event in Birmingham on May 16, 1998. Jubilee 2000 hope to establish a chain of people all around the building where the G7 Summit is taking place, symbolising breaking the chains of debt.



The speaker at General Committee was Nick Buxton, Communications Officer of Jubilee 2000 Coalition.

He also spoke of the factors which had given rise to debt in the world's poorest nations, and the ways in which those in the UK could help to campaign to cancel these unpayable debts.

Just as Christians took the lead in the anti-slavery movement in the 1830s, so General Committee members were urged to support Jubilee 2000, and to campaign to celebrate the Millennium by abolishing the slavery of debt.

New Vice-President announced

Revd Andrew Rigden Green, Senior Pastor at Upton Vale Baptist Church, Torquay has been nominated as the next Vice-President of BMS for the year 1998/99, which will result in him becoming BMS President leading up to the Millennium 1999/2000.

The voting for the new Vice-President is usually taken at the following March General Committee, but because of the strategic nature of this important year, and the need to plan ahead for it, the procedure for voting for the next Vice-President was brought forward from March 1998 to October 1997.

Andrew has as his vision to make some important "connections" which, he believes, are often ignored; for example, the connection between worship and mission, between evangelism and foreign mission, and between spirituality and mission. He says, "In all these connections there is a common concern for the honour and glory of God."

He believes that for too long mission has been regarded as the arena for specialists, and pleads for both individuals and local churches to make the connection that mission is at the heart of everything.

Andrew's nomination will be ratified at the BMS Annual Meeting in May.

Travel Agents targeted

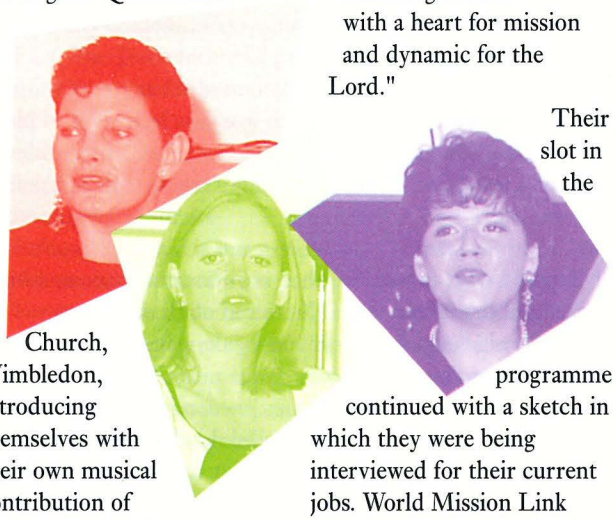
An appeal to General Committee delegates to encourage their travel agents to become involved in an anti child prostitution and sex tourism campaign was made by Peter Briggs, Secretary of the BMS Justice and Peace Advisory Group.

A new leaflet has been launched that has the support of the Home Office and aims to educate business travellers and holiday makers concerning the exploitation of women and children in Far Eastern countries. He urged them to take a copy of this leaflet to their local travel agents and to carry out a short questionnaire to make their travel agents aware of the situation.

Managers spice things up

"Tell me what you want,
what you really, really want
If you want to see some changes
You gotta move on with the times,
look towards the future
and do not be surprised."

"Spice girls" Fiona Pimlott, Katrina Dando and Carolyn Cole stormed on to the stage at Queens Road Church, Wimbledon, introducing themselves with their own musical contribution of their vision for the work involved in their new jobs.



Fiona Pimlott, the new Youth and Children's Co-ordinator, sang

"I want to see our youth
Moving on with God,
With a zeal for Jesus,
and to walk the land he trod."

Katrina Dando, the new Publicity Manager, was actually called "Feisty Spice" by her previous boss at Smith and Nephew. Her vision:

"I want to see this mission
growing and alive
with a brand new image
before it's gone and died."

Carolyn Cole, Volunteer Co-ordinator sang:

"I want to see all people
travelling abroad
with a heart for mission
and dynamic for the Lord."

Their slot in the programme continued with a sketch in which they were being interviewed for their current jobs. World Mission Link organiser Audrey Rowland played the part of a General Committee member interviewing each in turn. The item finished with Carolyn (who sang at her interview) singing another song.

Baptist House News

Welcome to

Ralph Hall

Ralph is the new Graphic Designer in the Department for Constituency Support. He is responsible for the design of much of *mh*, as well as other publicity materials. He comes to BMS from Belfast and previously worked for Derek Prince Ministries in Harpenden and Omega Design in Londonderry.

Joy Knapman

Technically there is no need to welcome Joy, as she is a well-known and well-loved face around BMS, but from the autumn of 1997 Joy came to Didcot and took over as Director for Missionaries.

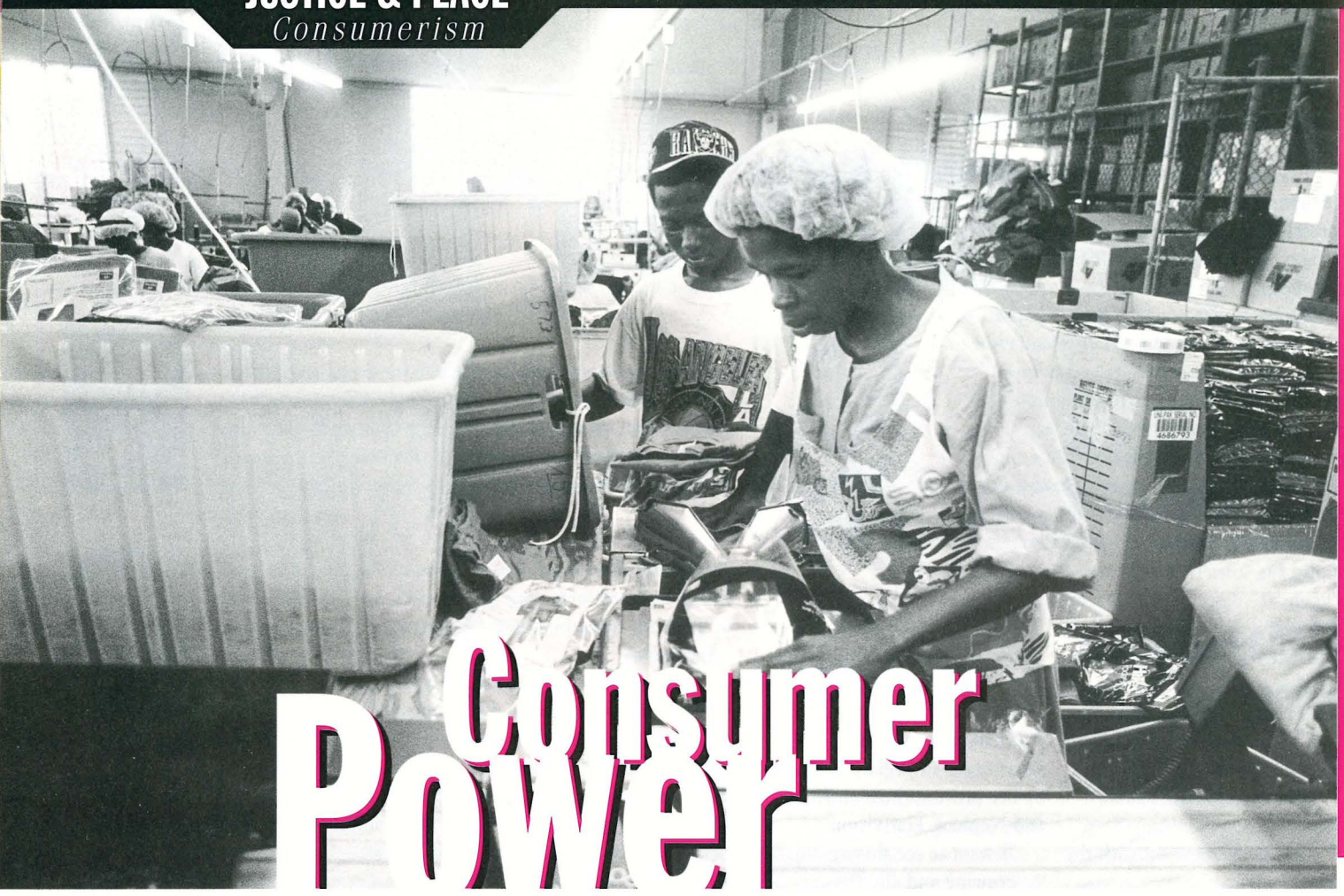
Born in Exeter, Joy was part of a long-established Baptist family and she remembers her personal commitment to Christ as a child "quite vividly." After school she began work as a secretary in a solicitor's office in Exeter, and, she says, "I was beginning to feel a hint that the Lord might want me elsewhere." She dismissed the hint, and looked for alternative employment, finding it in the Civil Service. But the sense of God's call did not go away, and she found herself contacting BMS. At that time missionaries went into education, medical or church work. Joy continues the story: "I went to Candidate Board, and two requests had come in for secretarial work!"

In 1960 Joy went to Calcutta, India, one of 160 BMS missionaries who were in India and Bangladesh at that time. She describes herself as "a small cog in the wheel." In Calcutta she worked with Neil McVicar, the Finance Secretary and Administrator, for the first ten years. Then, when Neil left, she assumed some of his responsibilities. Almost inevitably she says, she got involved in legal matters for BMS, but her first love is to work with people, and she also established personal links with individuals, churches and church partners.

In 1979 she returned to the UK to look after elderly parents and started a new career as a social worker focusing on mental health work. But she left this in 1988 to come back to BMS as Regional Representative for Asia, and "for the last nine years" she says, "I have lived out of a suitcase." The highlight of these nine years for her was to make the initial visit to Indonesia.

Having signalled to BMS that she would like to withdraw from all the travelling by May 1998, she found herself back into a more settled life earlier than expected, when upon Sian William's departure, she was asked by BMS if she would come back to take over as Director for Missionaries. This appointment will last during the period of management review at BMS. Joy says, "I feel so privileged at how God has led me. All the bits of the jigsaw have fitted together. It's been amazing!"

BMS News



Consumer Power

INCREASING PRESSURE ON RETAILERS IS MAKING THEM THINK CAREFULLY ABOUT THE SOURCE OF THEIR PRODUCTS AND THE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH THEY ARE PRODUCED. **RICHARD WELLS** FINDS THAT THINGS ARE CHANGING IN THE CONSUMER WORLD

Third World workers turn out goods for the West . . . but at what cost?

Pictures by Nancy Durrell McKenna, Oxfam

No one likes being told what to buy. So when someone comes along with the message that you should use Brand X instead of Brand Y, you quickly discover the challenge to your brand loyalty generates an interesting assertive response.

"Who on earth are they to tell me!"

To the business world this presents a distinct commercial disadvantage so it has had to develop an effective method of persuading consumers to brand switch.

It's called advertising.

They convince you of your "need" or persuade you that you can improve your lifestyle and – guess what – their product fits the bill . . . exactly.

And so you swap to Brand X.

It's a different story with pressure groups which are driven by an environmental or economic passion for changing attitudes to purchase decisions. However worthwhile the cause, their stark, demanding and often unsubtle messages have in the past left the adult population largely unmoved.

Were it not so, it would be reasonable to expect supermarket shelves to heave with stocks of fairly-traded goods, or furniture warehouses to make a louder noise about

the source of timber for their products-brought about by public demand.

Things are changing, though.

Emerging today is a generation of thinking young people who show signs of caring passionately about issues affecting the environment, justice and fairness.

These are the children of the advertising age.

Marketeers know that as well as having the largest disposable income of any age group, young people have easily moulded opinions, and their influence is a force to be reckoned with.

Research has shown that children and young people affect significantly the purchase decisions made within the family. It won't be long before this influence is being measured in the number of fairly traded goods on the shelves. In fact, in a recent Sainsbury's supermarket customer vote, two brands of fairly traded tea bags were among the top 100 products.

The groundswell of opinion is beginning to make a difference to suppliers' thinking.

Sainsbury's says it is looking at the whole concept of ethically traded products and has stocked Cafédirect, one of the fairly-traded coffees, since 1993.

Last year Tesco formed a group to examine how standards among suppliers could be improved and how the company should respond to ethical issues like child exploitative labour and minimum wages in developing countries.

Safeway, too, said it was monitoring conditions relevant to ethical purchasing.

For some, this is not moving quickly enough. The long-term aim of Christian Aid is to change current supermarket practices so that customers can sit down for their meals in the knowledge that people have not had to suffer appalling treatment to put the food on their plates. Aid organisations' investigations during the past year revealed an alarming incidence of injustice to workers in developing countries.

In Asia the aid agency Oxfam has uncovered cottage industries producing clothes for the British market employing cheap labour in conditions which, it says, are an affront to human dignity.

Many suffer ill health, restricted toilet breaks, poor ventilation and lighting, and long hours. One woman in Bangladesh, working to supplement the family income, was paid the equivalent of £4.64 a month for sewing on collars daily from 7am to 10pm. (Exchange rate: for every £1, you get about 75 Taka. A family could exist on about 2,000 Taka, or £26.50, a month.)

In Central America, from which Britain imports annually more than 300 million kilogrammes of bananas, workers on large plantations treat job insecurity, violence and attack as an everyday hazard.

When Christian Aid asked Sainsbury's and Waitrose about the source of their own-brand mini bananas from Colombia, it says both declined to give details.

The agency's plan is that shoppers should use their consumer power to get supermarkets to use theirs. Something like 80% of consumers in Britain do their shopping in supermarkets. In 1996 they spent about £36,000 million in the top ten supermarkets, whose groups account for almost 64% of total supermarket food sales.

Many suffer ill health, restricted toilet breaks, poor ventilation and lighting, and long hours.

Not only do these companies dominate the market, but as their share of the market grows so does their influence over how food is produced. And it was here that Christian Aid's campaign was aimed.

It enlisted the help of tens of thousands of students, youth groups, churches, company employees and individual consumers to put pressure on supermarkets to adopt externally verified codes of conduct which promoted good working conditions among suppliers' workers in the Third World.

The campaigners' demands were backed by millions of pounds' worth of till receipts and thousands of letters to supermarkets.

Today seven out of the top ten supermarkets have drafted ethical policies. Six of the ten have adopted a code of conduct and agreed in principle to external verification. Christian Aid is encouraged but firm in its aim to see uniform standards to measure the whole industry and the independent checking of codes of conduct. Whatever the speed of progress by stores, the report provides strong evidence of growing support among Britain's shoppers for action by supermarkets to ensure Third World producers provide a fairer deal for their workers.

It also shows a developing climate of openness to change from Brand Y to Brand X . . . so long as Brand X didn't get there at the expense of someone's livelihood – or their life.●

Richard Wells is a journalist and is the BMS Director for Constituency Support

We can draw the curtains

"Alarming news of serious violations of human rights is coming out of Burma. The Karen living in that country are often suppressed and killed by the Burmese troops. Refugees living in the most appalling situation in Thailand are forced to return to Burma into a very dangerous situation."

Part of the International Federation of Rural Adult Catholic Movements' statement concerning indigenous issues at the 53rd Session of the UN Commission on Human Rights.

IT IS ESTIMATED THERE ARE 22.7 MILLION REFUGEES IN THE WORLD TODAY. **JAN KENDALL** LOOKS AT ONE GROUP OF REFUGEES ON THE BURMESE /THAI BORDER.

Nobody wants to become a refugee. But for the Karen people living in the Karen state in Burma, there is very little option. The Burmese State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), formerly the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), has intensified its campaign against the Karen people, subjecting them to forced labour or portering carrying heavy weaponry, arbitrary taxation, land confiscation, torture, rape and executions. In the latest offensive around 20,000 Karen civilians have left their homes and opted to flee to Thailand.

New refugees continue to arrive all the time at various locations along the border. In some areas the camps are still open, but in others the Thai army is refusing to allow new arrivals into the camps.

The Thai government has sent signals that it will only provide temporary asylum to the refugees. Some 2,700 of them, arriving at Pu Muang camp (K24) were not provided with any adequate shelter for the first two weeks after arrival: they received one plastic sheet per family and were not allowed to build even a temporary structure.

The UNHCR were not allowed into the camp and people went without medical help for four days. More than half of the refugees suffered malaria, diarrhoea and other sicknesses.

Now that some camps are closed, the refugees cannot leave them to do daily or seasonal work outside, such as working in the Thai rice plantations, for which they earn 50 to 60 Thai baht a day (less than two US dollars) and so it is getting more difficult for the average family to make ends meet.

Family A - (names omitted to preserve identities) husband, wife and four children - could no longer survive. The husband was forced to act as a porter for the SPDC troops for five days every month. Eventually he became ill and was too sick to do this any more. SPDC then demanded that his family pay huge amounts of money in lieu of his work. On 15 March 1997 this family along with all the other villagers were driven out of their homes, which were then destroyed. Families were scattered. At first they did not want to suffer the indignity of being refugees; they hid in the forest for months, but eventually they had no choice and went to the border. On 29 August 1997 they arrived at Mae La RefugeeCamp (K14).

Family B - husband, wife and two children - also arrived at Mae La Camp in August 1997. Their story was a similar one. The husband too had been required to do heavy portering work for SPDC and had become ill. In response he was beaten, threatened with death, tied to a tree and tortured with hot irons and left for days. Following that ordeal he was forced into building roads, and finally their village was destroyed. After many months they too came to the border.

A refugee, a mother of four children said, "We get basic food from these foreign (humanitarian) organisations, but we still need some money to spend for general things such as good diets for sick children, a few clothes and school fees. So we need small jobs for a small income."

Camp closures have the knock-on effect that non-government organisations (NGOs) such as the Burmese Border Consortium are left with no choice but to provide basic necessities and it is feared that this in turn will make the refugees more dependent.

The refugees receive a diet of rice, salt, fish paste and tomato sauce. Yellow beans and soya bean oil were recently added in some camps. Vegetables are needed to make up nutritional deficiencies.

Camps 2 and 3 had been plagued with rats which destroyed rice, but with help, the camp leaders were able to overcome this problem. People were offered prizes (noodles or sardines) for catching the rats and in one month 2,000 rats were handed in!

Camp resources seem to get more and more stretched: medical staff numbers are cut with government cut backs, and inflation has reduced the buying power for basic foodstuffs. The Thai baht has dropped from 25 to the US dollar in June to nearly 40 in October which has had its effect on prices. Petrol has increased by 30%, rice by 20%, and yellow beans by 50% since the last purchase.

> **"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me."**
>
> **(Matthew 25:35,36)**

Weather brings its own problems. The monsoon season brought flooding to Mae La camp (K14), where three times in 1997 the refugees had to take part in a major clean-up.

But the coming of the dry season brings different fears. Earlier in the year the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA) and SPDC soldiers attacked refugee camps inside Thailand. In January 1997 DKBA and SPDC troops burned down Wangka camp (K16) and Don Pa Kiang camp (K15), making more than 10,000 refugees homeless.

The threats continue, and although there is no large scale fighting SPDC troops are still entering villages, burning and looting houses, and killing people.

The refugee problem here and elsewhere is not just an internal matter. It will not go away if we pretend it does not exist. Refugees cross international borders, and they ask for their voice to be heard: "We need to be able to return to our country and stay there in love and peace. We want to govern ourselves with unity and co-operation for a land of peace."●

Jan Kendall is Editor of *mh*

Arms to Indonesia

ALAN BETTERIDGE SPEAKS OUT

The 1997 Baptist Assembly in London unanimously passed a resolution calling for an end to arms sales to Indonesia. The day before the motion was put, the neighbouring Queen Elizabeth II Centre was the scene of non–violent protests on the same issue, directed at (and within) the AGM of British Aerospace, suppliers of Hawk aircraft. Sixteen more of these were approved for export to Indonesia from the UK in November 1996.

Why this concern? Because of human rights abuses in Indonesia against opposition politicians, trade unionists, protesting students and underpaid workers. This led Amnesty International to speak critically of another export licence granted in December 1996 for 50 Alvis Scorpion armoured vehicles. This was the first time that Amnesty International had commented on a UK arms export.

Furthermore, Indonesia has for years ignored United Nations resolutions calling for the people of East Timor to be allowed to determine their own future. This former Portuguese colony lived separately from surrounding Indonesia for generations, until invaded and absorbed by Indonesia as long ago as 1975. Two hundred thousand East Timorese have been killed since then, most notoriously the 200 massacred at a cemetery in the capital Dili in November 1991. This was what alerted the world to what was going on.

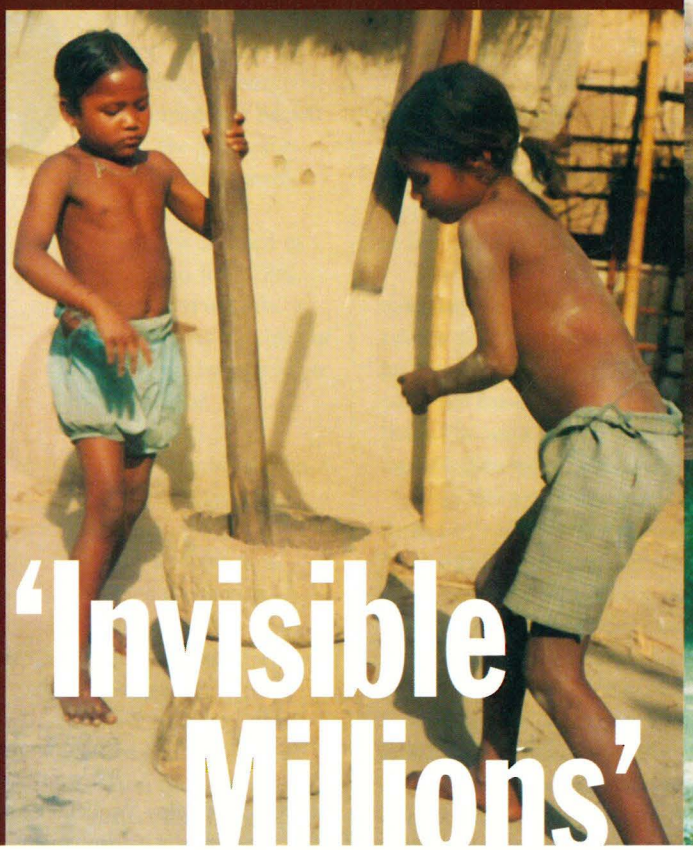
The day our Assembly resolution was being passed, the UK was changing its Government. New criteria for arms exports were announced in July, applying to any country. They prohibited "the sale of arms to regimes that might use them for internal repression or international aggression." The minister responsible for Indonesian affairs at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office agreed in October that, "certain goods have more obvious potential for use in internal repression than others, such as armoured personnel carriers designed for internal security." Although the armoured vehicles from Coventry's Alvis have not been cancelled, a much smaller new order for specially adapted Landrovers from nearby Courtauld's Aerospace has not been permitted. We now have a peace camp at Alvis on the north side of Coventry, a daily reminder of the ongoing issue.

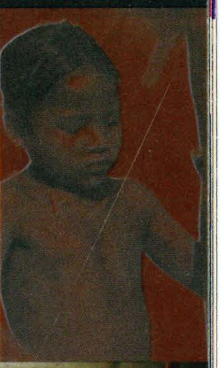
Foreign Secretary Robin Cook's visit to Indonesia last August was meant to encourage Indonesia's economic growth, in which the UK is the second largest foreign investor (Japan is first) apart from oil. At the same time he wanted to explain that economic progress is not hampered by concerns for human rights, but rather is helped by them – human rights as laid out in the UN Declaration on Human Rights, not as 'adapted' for local political convenience.

The tide of opinion against arms exports in general, and to repressive regimes in particular, is growing, both in our country and abroad. Christians are always challenged to be peacemakers (Psalm 34:14; Matthew 5:9; 2 Corinthians 10:3–5), and Christians will still be concerned whichever way the tide flows (Luke 9:62).●

Alan Betteridge is one of the ministers of Queen's Road Baptist Church, Coventry and Chairman of 'Stop Alvis Tanks to Indonesia', a 'Campaign Against the Arms Trade' campaign.

OFTEN UNSEEN, EASILY EXPLOITED, CHILDREN ACROSS THE WORLD ARE FORCED INTO WORK BECAUSE OF POVERTY. MANY BECOME VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ABUSE OR PERSONAL VIOLENCE, BUT NOT ALL. SOME ARE PAID A WAGE AND TAUGHT A SKILL. **SAM GIBSON** ASKS WHEN IS CHILD LABOUR EXPLOITATIVE, AND WHEN IS IT EMPLOYMENT?





The 'Invisible Millions'

Eleven year old Sonia earns around 6p per hour hand-stitching footballs for export from India to Europe. It takes her four to five hours to complete one ball and she earns less than one per cent of its retail value.

Vindod was eight when he began working for 12 to 14 hours each day weaving carpets in India. He was not paid a penny for his first year, was once hung upside down for a minor fault and had small knife wounds filled with match-stick powder and burned.

Cases like Vindod's are clearly situations of abuse and Sonia's pitiful wage is exploitative, but can all child labour be seen as such? Some child domestic workers live and work in homes which are cleaner and safer than the homes of their parents and helping out in the home has always been part of a child's upbringing.

The difference is that the child's labour has now become a traded commodity and that they often have no say over conditions of service, no privacy, no access to their earnings, no opportunity to go to school or to interact with their peers and little access to their parents. Isolation can often cause severe psychological stress.

What about stitching footballs? This is not a hazardous occupation and some children slot it around their schooling. Sonia's mother was ill and her father gave up work to take care of her. Without her tiny income, the family would be destitute and Sonia forced into more exploitative forms of child labour. On the other hand, working for several hours a day in a hunched, squatting position to the exclusion of other pursuits is not good for the development of any child.

So, what is the answer? Many would say "simple – stop all child labour" but, when garment manufacturers in Bangladesh agreed in July 1995 to phase out the use of child labour, up to 30,000 children lost their jobs and many were forced onto the streets.

In the short term, children freed from work need to be rehabilitated. The Rugmark Foundation issues licences to looms in India who agree not to employ children. Regular spot checks paid for by exporters ensure this, while importers of the carpets contribute to a UNICEF fund to run a rehabilitation shelter, teaching ex-child workers, and a primary school for weavers' children. Rugmark's work proves that carpet manufacture, free of child labour, is economically viable and that labour standards can be maintained nationally.

Long term however, the only answer is to change attitudes. Without sufficient jobs for adult relatives, some children will need to help earn enough money to feed their families but that work should never be at the expense of their childhood.

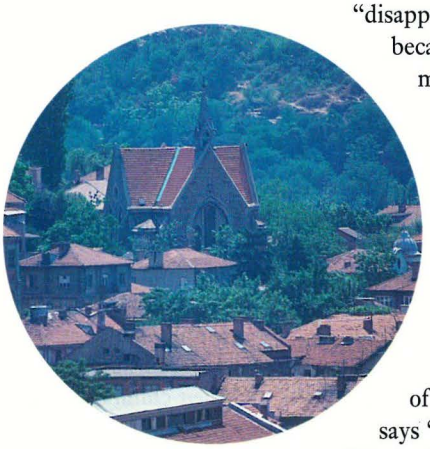
The child's rights also need to be safeguarded so that they are treated as employees with fair pay and proper working conditions. There are no overnight solutions.●

They eat Babies, don't they?

THEO ANGELOV SPOKE TO **JAN KENDALL** ABOUT WHAT IT'S LIKE BEING AN EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN IN BULGARIA TODAY

It was in February 1995 that the Bulgarian Baptists asked fellow Baptists all over the world for help as they were suffering increasing discrimination and reporting growing opposition and acts of moral, if not physical, abuse.

Three years on, what has changed? Bulgarian Baptists suffered much under Communism, and their membership was reduced to less than 1,000 believers through imprisonments and political "disappearances". People were arrested because they were pastors or church members. When freedom came in 1990 there was much rejoicing. Numbers have consistently increased since then because of a commitment to evangelism. Today there are 54 Baptist churches in Bulgaria, with a total membership of 3,200.



Dr Theo Angelov, President of the Bulgarian Baptist Union says "These changes were good for us. We received the freedom to worship and to evangelise as we liked." But this was only in the beginning. Gradually restrictions began to stifle evangelical life.

In July 1992 the Baptist Union of Bulgaria obtained some land in Sofia. They intended to build a theological college, church, school, and an orphanage, but work stopped when the City Council overturned the plans because of their "negative effects".

Later the Council reversed their decision and allowed the college and orphanage to go ahead. But very little has happened since - the Mayor of Sofia has still not put his signature on the relevant piece of paper.

The Baptists in Sofia are struggling for space in their church which is old and too small for their needs. But, at the moment, there seems little possibility that the decision will be overturned which will allow them to build a new church.

The logic of the Council runs as follows, says Dr Angelov: "They say, 'How shall we allow the Baptists to look after orphans? It will be dangerous for the children because they will teach them and the children will become Baptists'." He adds ironically: "So it seems that it's better for them to run on the streets or become drug addicts."

Other Evangelical churches are suffering similarly. The Methodists built a church in the city of Varna, on the

Black Sea, and when they got to the roof the local authorities stopped them building. It has been two years now and no one knows when they will be allowed to continue.

The main church in Bulgaria is the Orthodox church, and Dr Angelov says, "It looks on Bulgaria as its own territory. It tries to protect itself from all the others - especially the Evangelical churches."

Officially all the churches have equal rights once they have been officially registered and recognised. But the Orthodox church is more equal than some of the others. For example it has all the access to the mass media - to TV, radio and the newspapers, whereas the Baptists have no access to these things. It is not so long ago that one national newspaper carried a news report under the heading, "Baptists eat babies for breakfast!"

They have also been accused of being a dangerous sect, threatening the culture and tradition of the country, and distributing drugs to young people, and they do not have the right to defend themselves. Dr Angelov says: "You can imagine the mass media print something about a denomination or a church, and there is no answer. People begin to think it's true."

Church newspapers and magazines are allowed

Officially all the churches have equal rights... But the Orthodox church is more equal than the others

A lot of books have even been printed in Bulgaria in the last year, but when it comes to importing religious books from elsewhere, that is a different matter. "Last year," says Dr Angelov, "we received a shipment (of books) from the States for distribution free of charge, but the Customs charged us a lot. Even for Bibles sent from outside, we have to pay all kinds of customs duties and get all sorts of permission."

Missionaries who want to stay longer than a month also have a tough time - that's the length of time that their visa will be issued for. So every 30 days they have to leave Bulgaria, and come back again. "You can imagine the effect this has on their work," says Dr Angelov.

Bulgaria is only one of several countries in Eastern Europe where life is becoming increasingly difficult for Evangelical Christians. "Pray for us," appeals Dr Angelov. "Remember the special cases, and where possible put political pressure on your government. All Eastern European governments are interested in investments from the West. They are ready to take help and accept money."

The inference from this is clear: You have a voice, which will be heard. Use it. ●

Theo Angelov is President of the Bulgarian Baptist Union

Mike Pilavachi

Jesus and Justice

Jesus announced the beginning of his ministry in Luke 4 with these words: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor; he has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind; to release the oppressed; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."

This was his manifesto. He came to preach good news of forgiveness and salvation. He came to proclaim freedom. He came to bring healing and release from oppression. He came to bring Social Justice! The good news was for the poor. Not simply the poor in spirit, but the financially and materially poor. The freedom was for those unjustly imprisoned, the release was for those who were under the yoke of oppression, the year of the Lord's favour was the time when debts were cancelled and slaves set free.

Jesus did not simply proclaim this "good news", he *was* the good news. He not only sided with the poor and oppressed, he became one of them. Jesus was God become poor. He spent time with the "publicans and sinners".

In John 4 we find Jesus talking with a Samaritan woman who was living in immorality. Until we understand the context, we cannot begin to see what a revolutionary thing this was. A respectable Jewish man did not talk to a woman at a well at midday on his own. A respectable Jew would not talk to a Samaritan - the social outcasts of the time. A little like Wimbledon supporters. A respectable Jew would not hold a civil conversation with someone who was living in obvious immorality. Jesus talked with and treated with dignity a *Samaritan woman* caught in *immorality*. He loved those whom society had no time for. So must we.

What does this mean in practice? First of all it means we must learn to be generous with what we have. This has to involve our money and our possessions. Many of us hate talking about money. Yet I believe how we use our money is one of the key tests of discipleship. It has been said that the last thing to get converted is a Christian's wallet! The Bible is full of teaching on wealth and poverty. It is the second most common topic in the Old Testament after idolatry. In the New Testament there are more than 500 verses of direct teaching on the subject. That is an incredible one in sixteen verses. Jesus talked more about wealth and poverty than he did about heaven and hell, sexual morality, the law or the second coming. One in every five verses in James' letter is about the rich and poor. In Luke's gospel, it is one in seven.

Jesus said, "Give and it will be given to you, pressed down, shaken together, running over, it will be poured into your lap." The first Christians were known as the people of the Way before they were called Christians. This was because of the way they lived. They were not known as the people of the doctrine or the people of the experience but the people of the Way.

Mother Teresa of Calcutta was once asked why she and those who worked with her gave themselves on behalf of the poor, the starving, the dying. Her reply hit the nail on the head. She said, "We do it for Jesus." This is true worship of Jesus, to care for the poor, feed the hungry, speak for those who have no voice. For he said, "If you do this to one of the least of my brethren, you do it for me." Let's dance upon injustice - for Jesus! ●

Mike Pilavachi heads up the Soul Survivor team and pastors a congregation in Watford specially aimed at reaching young people.

TRAIDCRAFT Voting in Fair

JOHN MARTIN SPOKE TO **ANGELA SMITH MP,** TRAIDCRAFT REPRESENTATIVE IN THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT.

Angela Smith, the 38 year-old Labour and Co-operative Member for Basildon and East Thurrock, is a symbol of the new breed of Parliamentarians entering the scene following the election of May 1997.

She eschews the severe black uniform that was the hallmark of women members. When she greeted me in the Members Lobby she was wearing a House of Commons-green trouser suit. As she poured me a coffee in the Members Tea Room she remarked ruefully that the battle to get fairly traded coffee in the Mother of Parliaments had still to be won.

Fair trade is an issue close to her heart. "I first got involved with it almost by accident," she said. "I was very interested in what was happening in Nicaragua and was involved in the Nicaragua solidarity campaign." Then came a letter from Traidcraft. Since she was interested in helping Nicaragua, would she consider taking a box of Nicaraguan coffee along to meetings of the local branch of the Labour Party? "I took the box of 36 packs of coffee. The people came back for more because they liked the coffee. So I got involved in Traidcraft from that angle."

It became the perfect shop window for her interest in international issues. As a member of the local Labour Party Executive she would turn up at meetings with an assortment of Traidcraft pens, key rings and crafts. Alongside them she kept a store of leaflets promoting Third World causes.

In her first year she sold £1,000's worth of Nicaraguan coffee. Cuban peppermints became a great seller. (With a lick of the lips she adds that they are back on sale in the latest Traidcraft catalogue). Later, on a holiday in Cuba she met people whose goods are sold through Traidcraft. She found herself providing goods for churches and schools. "I would literally take my carrier bags along, set up a table with goods and leaflets on what it was about. People

Trade

Peter Bottomley MP & Angela Smith MP

would come up, chat and buy some things. It started very small."

Over a dozen years she has seen Traidcraft change a lot. The packaging of goods has improved. "When I started there was a lot of tatty packaging around and you had to get past that for people to realise the quality of the products was excellent," she says.

I asked her to spell out what the fair trade campaign was trying to achieve and how it went about it. "What we're trying to do is ensure that the people who are producing a particular product get a fair price for it."

Most small farmers and producers in the Third World would have few options but to sell their products to the representatives of cartels and name the price. Traidcraft enables them to form co-operatives to process, package and distribute their products. By cutting out the middle men, and not being forced to accept low prices set by big wholesalers, they benefit economically.

Traidcraft trains people in the basics of business and makes available seed capital for items like sewing machines and kilns. It can mean a higher return for groups of women setting up co-operatives to market their jewellery, or that farming communities can now send their children to school.

Obviously Traidcraft helps farmers get a better return. The all important test, is whether the coffee or other items are good enough to stand the marketplace test. "Initially people bought coffee from me because it helped a good cause," she recalls. "But when people started turning up at my door wanting more, I knew it was good coffee."

I pressed further. It's one thing to get people to buy packs of coffee at a Labour Party meeting or church fete. To make a real difference fair traded products need to find their way into the economic mainstream to retailers shelves.

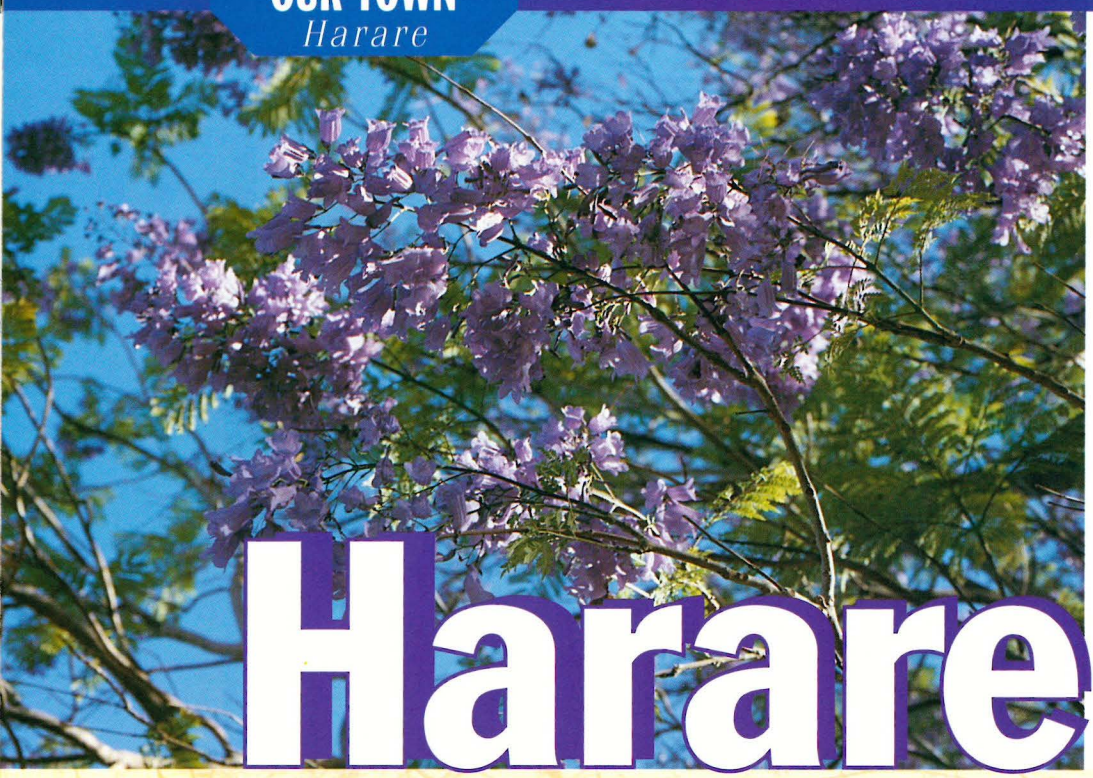
"In the early days you couldn't buy them in the supermarkets," she recalls. "Now Cafédirect is on the shelves at my local supermarket. That's a tremendous achievement. The trouble is there's still not enough information out there to raise people's consciousness. As it does, more people will opt to buy fairly traded products."

The products range looks set to increase even more. Demand for fairly traded tea is growing. Traidcraft has diversified into sugar, peppermints, chocolates, crafts, and jewellery. Fabrics have always been popular and the range of products available in Britain is growing all the time.

Now that she has entered Parliament and sits in the Council of Europe, what hopes does Angela Smith have for raising the issue of fair trade on the national scene? "What I'm hoping to do as the MP in my area is raise consciousness. A lot of people aren't aware of it."

She is conscious that as one of many hundreds of Traidcraft representatives she is "just a small cog". But it's a task offering enormous satisfaction. So, on she goes, holding coffee mornings for members of the local Labour Party where they can learn about the issue, pushing for attention for the issue in newspapers throughout her constituency. As we spoke she was planning to promote Traidcraft at a meeting of the United Nations Association. "There's no point in being in politics if you can't make a difference.●

John Martin is a writer and broadcaster, and the former editor of the Church of England Newspaper.

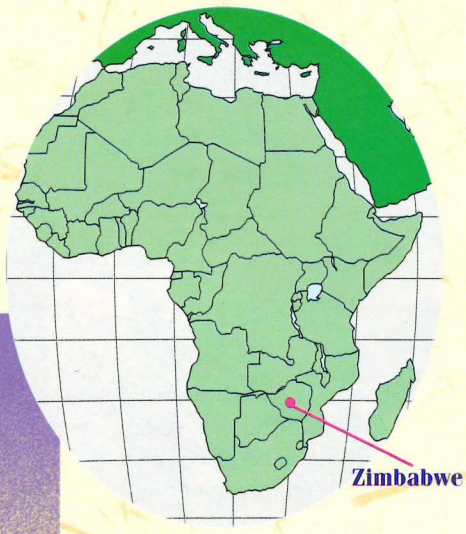


Harare

A SERIES EDITED BY **JAN KENDALL** THAT LOOKS AT TOWNS AND CITIES AROUND THE WORLD WHERE BMS PERSONNEL ARE WORKING

BY PHILIP IGOE, RACHEL HICKS, PETER HUNT & DAVID COBBY

PHOTOGRAPH: KENNETH BECKET NATURAL SCIENCE PHOTOS



Introduction

Michael Palin has suggested that Zimbabwe is "Africa sanitised". A gross understatement of the rich diversity that exists in Zimbabwe generally and Harare in particular. Certainly Harare refuses to submit to the stereotypical view of an African town or city. It is as cosmopolitan as any capital, and has the social life and amenities to go with it. Its high rise buildings, many put up post independence, suggest a wealth which many people would not ascribe to Africa. Yet it still retains a vibrancy that exudes only from Africa!

History

The first thing to notice about Harare is the colonial planning, all the streets are on a grid system. This neatly divided (and to a large extent still divides) rich and poor, black and white. Outside the city centre the leafy, roomy suburbs were for whites residences only. Around the very edges of Harare you can find the huge, sprawling 'townships' where the black work force were housed.

The first inhabitants of the area now known as Harare were Shona, led by a chief called Ne-Harawa meaning 'the one who doesn't sleep'. Through the years black inhabitants still called Salisbury 'Harare', until after independence in 1980 when Zimbabwe's capital was renamed.

Post independence many whites fled the country, leaving the way clear for some black people to take on decent jobs and housing. Now the leafy suburbs contain homes to both black and white. Sadly Harare is not a good example of multi racial harmony; there are still unofficial white and black areas. You'll not find whites living in the high density 'townships', or if you do they work for mission societies! Also there are the cafes and shops with a largely white clientele and as you sit and sip your coffee it's easy to forget you're in Africa - except that the people who serve you will be black...

First Impressions

Harare: it's mid October, and the jacaranda trees are blossoming purple/pink. Not just one or two here and there but whole avenues of them. It is truly a sight that you have to see for yourself. Overloaded taxi-buses cram the streets, babies sleep as they bounce along on their mothers backs, delicately piled pyramids of fruit and vegetables are spread out at road-side stalls. How do people manage not to fall over when there are so many banana skins littering the pavement?

Further down the street, in the Central

Views of Harare

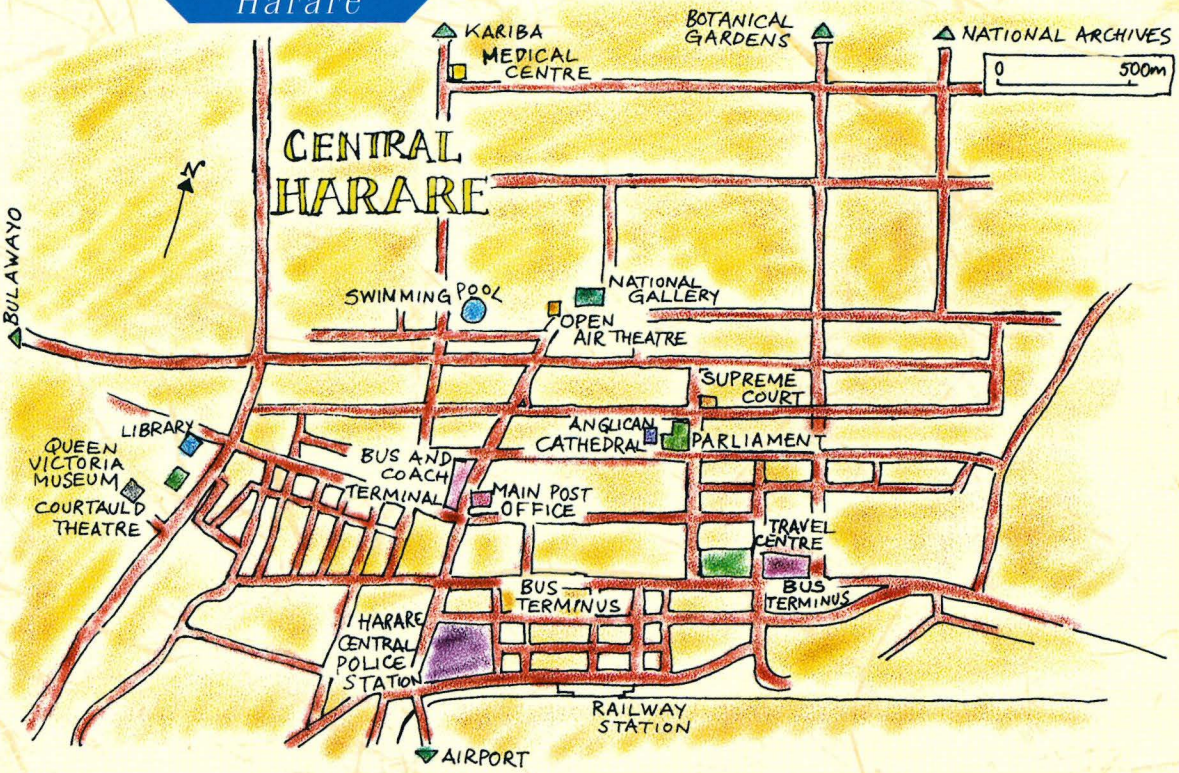
Park, office workers are whiling away their lunch hour sitting on the grass. A pastor is moving among them with his bible, stopping to chat and explain a few verses to anyone willing to listen. Very few refuse; most nod as he talks about Jesus' death and resurrection, and say yes, they believe it. But who knows how many of them really understand the implications of this message for their lives and for their city?

Shops

Shopping areas, although not designated white and black areas are often more frequented by a certain clientele. The newest development in Harare is a shopping mall called Westgate, a large complex with many modern stores, a four screen cinema, water fountains and a food court with pizza and Chinese takeaways. There is an increasing variety of goods in places such as Westgate including many imports from South Africa, USA and Europe, all with a hefty price tag. The minimum wage for a domestic worker in Harare is $450 (about £23) and as a trip to the cinema costs about $19, and a shirt/blouse from a shop in Westgate costs about $400, prices create a barrier. The liveliest place to shop in Harare is Mbare market, attached to one of the larger townships. Here you can haggle over the price of tomatoes, get a nice shirt (with only two previous, careful owners) and stock up on traditional herbal medicines.

PHOTOGRAPH: PETER HUNT

Tuck Shops are commonly found in many of the high density suburbs



Social aspects

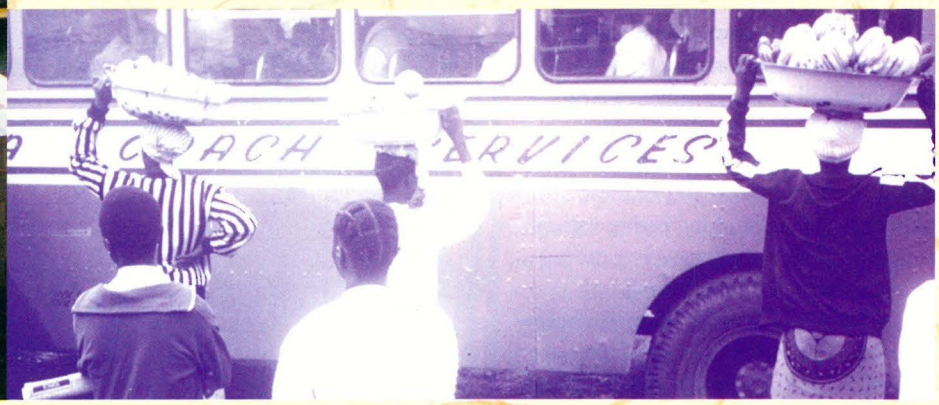
Harare is a fast growing metropolis, with new buildings going up all the time. It is by far the biggest city in Zimbabwe, attracting many people in from rural areas. Most of these people come to the city to find jobs. Many of them fail, and wind up begging in the streets. One of the most distressing sights is to see children begging in the streets: young children, poorly dressed. But many of the children are sent out to beg by their parents, and are not really homeless at all.

Harare has its share of places not fit for human habitation. There's a young Christian couple, for instance, who live in a small house, which they rent. It is not much more than a brick shed. They and their baby all live in one room which can barely hold a double bed. They have no lights in their home other than one or two candles.

Transport

Travel anywhere in Harare means using public transport. The buses are affectionately called "Chicken buses", mainly because most of the time someone on the bus had chickens with them. They are not all that reliable, being prone to break down, and are not environmentally friendly. But they are a means of meeting people! The other popular form of transport is the Emergency Taxi (ET) - in effect, an old estate car with only the seats in it - no other luxuries. Into this car you fit as many people as possible (nine minimum, but sometimes 14 or more). This laden vehicle then attempts to move from A to B dropping off and picking up as it goes. For this luxury drive, one would expect to pay 1.5 Zim dollar (15p).

PHOTOGRAPH: PETER HUNT

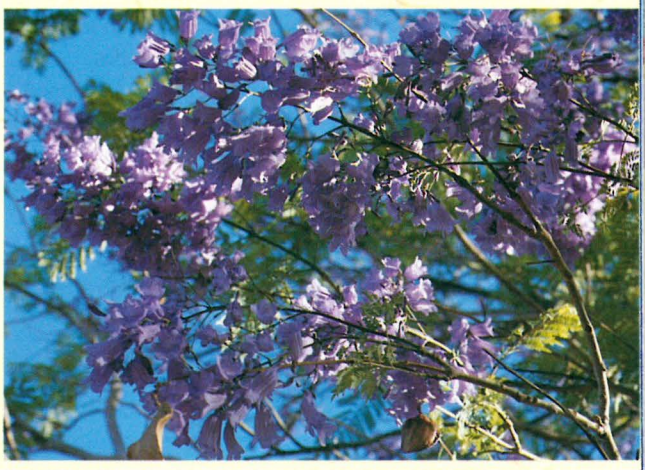


Church life

Churches are a little like shops, in that they too cater for a certain type of clientele. Traditional African churches tend to be vibrant with lots of singing, dancing and long, loud sermons, the services will last for around four hours including an hour long sermon. These can be contrasted with your more English churches, including the Anglican where the sermon lasts for 7.5 minutes and English hymns are sung to a piano/ organ. The sad thing about churches in Harare is that there are very few that have any kind of racial harmony, as black people moved into the previous white areas and began to attend the churches there, the whites moved out in droves to a certain few churches, which are now still predominantly white.

An Action Team member going home

It was four months later when the four us, in the same red National Baptist Convention truck we'd arrived in, with the same people in the same positions entered Harare from the opposite direction. In that time we'd experienced life in many townships. But I'd been immersed in a culture so different, able to experience life from such a radically different viewpoint, that this time I saw a very different Harare. Before, I'd noticed the spiders and lizards, the old cars, the simple accommodation and the black people. This time I noticed the white people; the absurd contrast between the townships and rural areas just outside the city, and the almost richer- than-western shopping centres. I noticed the expensive new cars, the swimming pools and the massive glass towers of banking and business. Harare is a most incredible city, beautiful and able to cater for just about anything you could want. But step outside the city, and then step back in, it'll certainly challenge your first impressions.



PHOTOGRAPH: KENNETH BECKET NATURAL SCIENCE PHOTOS

A small catering company in Harare inner city: helped with training in business management by Steve Seymour, BMS

The Democratic Republic of Congo

CONGO

Six months is a long time. A long time to be away from work and friends. A long time to leave newly planted churches unvisited. Time enough, as it happened, for a rebel army to march across the country and oust a corrupt kleptocracy from power in Kinshasa. Time enough to encounter mortal danger.

When on the Bateke plateau in March we had followed the taking of Kisangani by Kabila's troops on the radio. Then in April the fall of Lubumbashi and the advance to Kikwit. Where would Mobutu's troops make their last stand? Would our people be caught in the crossfire?

Hard news was scant. Rumour was rife. By May the defenders had retreated to the Mai Ndombe river, hotly pursued by the attackers. The bridge was blown up to stop their advance, but they found a way round. Routing those still fighting they pressed on to Nsele. Next stop the airport.

On the night of 16 May, they just missed the flight of Mobutu and family. General Mahele, the army commander, was assassinated. In a power vacuum Kinshasa held its breath, but not for long. At dawn Kabila's AFDL forces, many of them young people, entered the city to a rapturous welcome by the long-suffering population. Liberation at last!

Pockets of resistance were flushed out and some semblance of normality returned to the capital. Elsewhere security was still patchy. Pastor Mbieme and others from the plateau came by. They had their stories to tell, but everyone was safe.

It wasn't till September that we began to plan with District Evangelist Mputu our first trip back to the plateau. How, we wondered, had those young churches fared?

The loss of the Mai Ndombe and Lufimi bridges had cut the area in two. On a first trip we would take a long road round to get to Bwantaba, and visit Mbankana, Nguene and Bombo-Lumene from there. At each place a service of thanksgiving for God's protection would be followed by a working session on practical issues. On a subsequent trip, by a different road, we would aim for Kinzono and Nsuni.

Rough, long and bumpy though it was, the road brought us via scenic valleys, across small, but solid bridges over the turbulent waters of the Bombo and Lumene rivers, to the Bwantaba road. We entered the village to a great welcome from the children.

"We don't have to walk to Mbankana for school any more," they cried excitedly. "Our classes are here in the village!" Two classes, started for the youngest children the previous year with Education Department authorisation, had been expanded to the full six classes. Only children at secondary level would still walk the seven miles to Mbankana.

Next day the little stick-and-palm-frond church was full for a joyous service of thanksgiving, during which testimonies were shared. When the war came, most people had fled to a distant village. Only the old chief and some young men had stayed. Pastor Mbieme had served communion at Nguene, then made his way back on his bicycle to Bwantaba, meeting groups of fleeing soldiers, who stopped, searched and threatened him. Each time he showed his Pastor's card. When it was safe he had gone to bring his wife and children and

A long time

. . . a time when the faithfulness of God to his people had been amply demonstrated.

the others home.

Later with the church members we helped sort out difficulties which had arisen. A small matter of transfer of membership had blown up into a quarrel. Two members had been suspended. Others were backbiting. Many weren't pulling their weight in building the classrooms or working in the church fields. The women's meeting had folded. Faith had cooled and love was lacking. You could see how Paul came to write his letters to young churches.

Each evening the children sang and danced to the drum, and the adults gathered. In the flickering light of a log fire Mputu and Belesi called people back to the basics of their faith, to heart searching, repentance and a new commitment to Christ.

At Mbankana too, in the middle of the week, people in their Sunday best filled the little church. They had fled when Mbankana had been shelled and the Lufimi bridge blown up. Their leader, Matondo, had taken his wife and family to a distant village for safety, but his eldest son had insisted on returning home. He didn't want soldiers stealing the fufu laid out to dry. Matondo had followed, but had been arrested as a spy. A soldier was ordered to shoot him, but as he loaded his gun the bullet fell to the ground. Taking him to be a powerful sorcerer the soldiers let him go. No civilian had been lost in Mbankana, and thanks were offered to God.

On the long, slow journey home there was time to reflect on ten days of listening, encouraging and teaching. Yes, six months had been a long time to be away. Time when the devil had not been idle. Thankfully, though, a time when the faithfulness of God to his people had been amply demonstrated.

Watch out or this cou

28:19 ACTION TEAMS

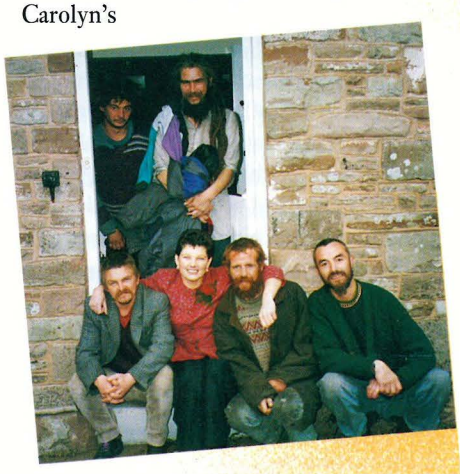
Carolyn Cole, the recently appointed Volunteer Co–ordinator undertook short–term adventure trips as a school girl; which turned into substantial mission projects, which turned into long–term mission commitments,which led to..... the BMS!

In 1985, Carolyn, then a sixth former, responded to a plea from the leaders of Peruvian Christians under attack from terrorists, the guerilla group the Shining Path. Six church elders had been assassinated at a prayer meeting. A pioneering team of 15 dedicated young Christians (many Baptist) helped establish a safe refuge in the northern jungles of Peru, an act of notable encouragement to a beleaguered people. The village was known as PazY Ezperanza – Peace and Hope. In 1995, an eventful decade later, Carolyn retraced her steps to the Peace and Hope village.

"Carolina, Carolina!" exclaimed a Quechua mother as she hastily dropped her banana leaves and came running towards this returning friend. A decade past had not in any way diminished the depth of relationship forged in adversity. At a civic reception in the northern city of Moyobamba, the governor of San Martin and Christian leader Dr Apolos Landa explained how unknown to the young team, their presence had afforded a measure of protection to the Quechua refugees living under the guerrilla death threat.

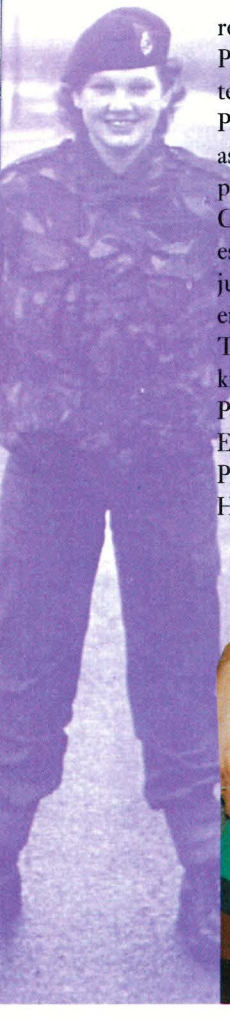
Four years as an undergraduate at Southampton University gave Carolyn four precious long vacations for frontline mission projects in four continents: Recife, Brazil; Jos, Nigeria; Fara, Portugal; and to the isolated former cannibal Gogodala people of the Fly River Delta in Papua New Guinea. On graduating, Carolyn joined the staff of Clayesmore School, Blandford to teach Geography, support the Christian Union and lead the infantry battalion in the CCF. This was followed with officer training at the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst, commissioned as Second Lieutenant Carolyn Cole TA!

Stepping from a public school arena to the arches of Waterloo Bridge and cardboard city, Carolyn joined Oasis at Haddon Hall Baptist Church to work with a Frontline Team, as directed by the Revd Steve Chalke. Two years later, a TV documentary of the work of Steve Chalke was to be, "captivated by Carolyn's

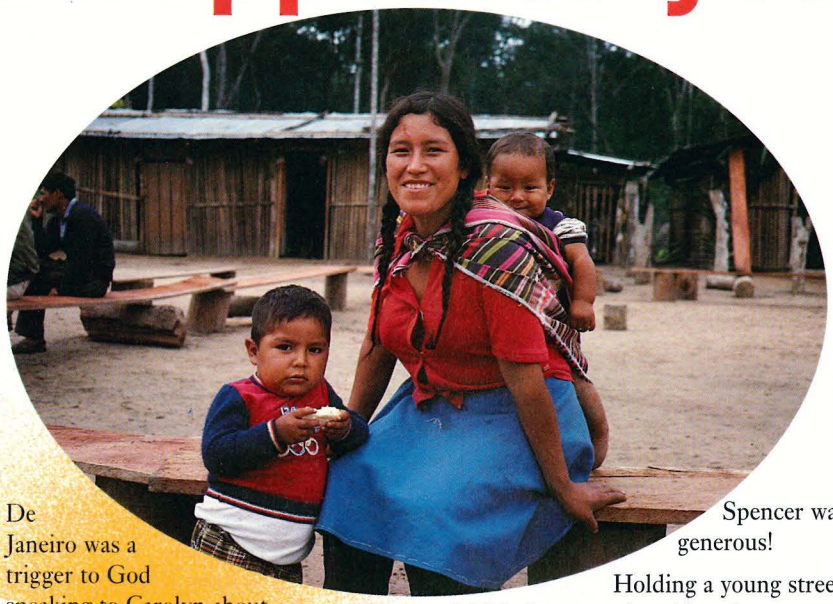


radiant smile", (quote from a TV reviewer). She had earlier spent a night in a street doorway in a cardboard box on the embankment to be "able to really empathise with those living on the streets ."

Study followed at All Nations College and a continued call to serve the street kids of Brazil, a follow–up to her earlier short–term experience in Brazil . A divine intervention on a bus in Rio



d happen to you



PHOTOGRAPH CAROLYN COLE

De Janeiro was a trigger to God speaking to Carolyn about returning to the country to work for him. She had found herself lost at night in this most notoriously dangerous city and had been rescued by a divinely placed Carioca (native of Rio) Christian. The love that she had developed for Brazil and its people remained and grew in the six years prior to her returning for full time service. In October 1993, four Waterloo Bridge men and their dog cashed in their 'giros' to travel and spend a weekend at respectable Gorsley Baptist Church, Herefordshire, to give a special, challenging flavour to Carolyn's valedictory – the Holy Spirit never ceases to surprise.

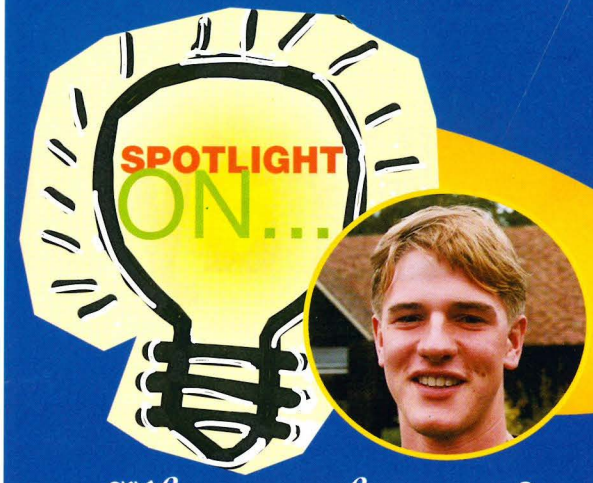
Three years of frontline service in Brazil, at Recife and Belo Horizonte, had many challenging moments. Robbed of her underwear at gunpoint near a favela whilst returning from using a friend's washing machine, became headline news at home. The replacement response of the Gloucester manager of Marks and Spencer was generous!

Holding a young street child in her arms, brushing the matt and grime and filth from her hair – a young lady worthy of dignity but deprived of it through cruel circumstances. The wild–eyed stare of a boy sniffing glue, in the body of a child but with the experience of a man – his childhood shattered and innocence destroyed. It was seeing the lives of children change which brought Carolyn most joy. A ten–year–old boy laughing and playing as a child, being himself, free and unafraid to express his feelings. She still misses them.

These experiences encapsulate two of Carolyn's distinctive contributions to the overseas children: demonstrating that unskilled but committed young people can make a significant and lasting impact in the most needy and isolated areas of the developing world and building specific lasting relationships with the pastor of the poor.

Carolyn is a tireless encourager of young people and a natural communicator of her radical vision to the UK churches. Many young people will testify how Carolyn's encouragement has resulted in a deepening commitment and life changing consequences. Carolyn now shares these special gifts with the BMS and the young people of the Baptist churches.●

PHOTOGRAPH CAROLYN COLE



Where are they now?

...Mat Wilson

After finishing his year on the 28:19 Action Team to Jamaica (92/93), Mat gained a degree in Sociology from Sussex University (where he co–ordinated Bible studies for the Christian Union), then took up a post in Portsmouth, working in a school for children with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Beginning with his time overseas and continuing throughout this period however, God's calling on his life was clear:

"The time spent in Jamaica had a profound effect upon me..... it helped me realise and appreciate the Baptist community throughout the world. The challenge of preaching..... as well as the experience of pastoral visits helped give me a small insight into ministerial life".

Married in May 1997, Mat has obeyed the call and is now training at Spurgeons College along with Steve Barber, the husband of his Action Team colleague Carolyn Hughes.

Prayer *focus*

ASIA

Peter and Karen Lloyd
Pokhara, NEPAL

Peter and Karen have taken a year out from their jobs to serve God as Barnabas Project volunteers. Peter, a teacher, has been given unpaid leave by his school and Karen has given up her job as a Christian careworker. The couple are members of Chipping Camden Baptist Church where Peter was a deacon and lay preacher and Karen served as overseas mission co–ordinator. They have long had a heart for mission but wanted an opportunity to serve God in a more full time capacity – the Barnabas Project gave them that opportunity.

Peter and Karen arrived in Nepal in early August last year. Just one day after their arrival Peter, thrown in at the deep end, had to begin teaching a class of 15 seven to nine–year–olds. All the children are from missionary families and the school encourages the children not only in their learning, but also in their Christian life.

After completing a basic Nepali language survival course, Karen began work with the Partnership for Rehabilitation team, helping those disabled by leprosy to learn practical skills. The aim is to make their clients economically and socially self–sufficient and to rehabilitate them back into their own society – not an easy task due to the social stigma still attached to the disease. Karen is involved in setting up vocational training programmes and dealing with publicity and marketing for products which the leprosy survivors produce for sale.

Please pray:

- **the Lloyds are developing good relationships with many Nepali people and need to be able to communicate easily – pray for their language skills.**
- **for good health**
- **pupils at the school come and go quickly – some are in class for only a week making organisation and planning difficult. Peter needs to come with new ways of dealing with this**

EUROPE

Ann and David MacFarlane
Barletta, ITALY

David has been pastoring the Baptist church at Barletta, in southern Italy since September 1996. There has been a lot of work to do as many general aspects of church life, such as Bible studies and prayer meetings, had been run down. Indeed, the first church prayer meeting held after the MacFarlanes induction marked the first time in 23 years that the church had met together for prayer! Ann is responsible for the Sunday school and women's meetings as well as being heavily involved in her own pastoral work and David is also responsible for helping the other 15 Baptist churches in his Association with evangelism and worship projects.

David and Ann are encouraged by the fruit they are seeing at Barletta. The church is rediscovering its responsibility to the community and the MacFarlanes are helping its members to discover and use their own God given gifts. The couple are particularly praying for revival amongst the young people. The BMS 28:19 Action Team of four British youngsters which joined the MacFarlanes in October, is helping with the work in that area.

Please pray:

- **that the church would continue to look outwards and would increase in its ability to aid its local community**
- **for strength, that David and Ann would not grow too tired from the many responsibilities they have.**
- **for the Action Team – that they would not be too homesick and would be able to use their gifts to really benefit the people of Barletta.**

Saverio and Betsy Guarna
Tirana, ALBANIA

Saverio and Betsy have been working with BMS as

Around the world

News from BMS colleagues and partners around the world to complement the BMS Prayer Guide

missionaries in Albania since July 1994. Until their evacuation from the country during the civil war in March 1997, Saverio was pastor of the First Baptist Church, Tirana. They returned to a very different country and situation in August. Many people stopped going to the church during this time of danger and distress, but others, remaining firm in their faith managed somehow to continue in fellowship despite bans on public meetings. The young church, bereft of its leaders, took matters into its own hands and God raised up leaders to take care of on–going church responsibilities.

1997 was a year of immense uncertainty for the Guarnas. First there was the pain of separation, being forced to leave the country and people they consider their own and feeling that they were abandoning their friends. There followed four and a half months of uncertainty, not knowing when they could return, nor to what. Finally, on 1 August, they landed at Tirana airport. The question – what now?

'Treading softly' is the word for the people of Albania. Submerged unrest and a potentially dangerous atmosphere still reside across the country and the Guarnas are entering a period of reflection, along with the church, to take stock and plan the way forward. Saverio and Betsy now see their role more as counsellors and co–workers to those who have proved their ability to lead during tough times. The task is still demanding however – to encourage emerging leaders to take their responsibilities a step further and to comfort and encourage those who still need to find their way in the church.

Please pray:

- **for security in people's lives and the opportunity for poor people to make a living**
- **that the church will emerge from this crisis strong and dedicated**
- **wisdom for Saverio, Betsy and the church leaders in seeking God's way forward**
- **God's continued protection over his people**

AFRICA

Simon and Karen Collins
Luanda, ANGOLA

Simon and Karen have been waiting since around April 1997 for visas to go out to Angola. The Bromsgrove GP and his teacher wife were originally told their visa application would take only one to two months but at the time of going to press, there had still been no news.

It has been a frustrating period for the couple as they are not sure why they have had to wait. Possibilities are that God is giving them time to prepare more fully for what is ahead, that it is time to sort out health problems or that he is keeping them safe whilst the situation in Angola is unstable. There are no easy answers however and Simon and Karen are instead trying to focus on using this period of waiting wisely.

Please pray:

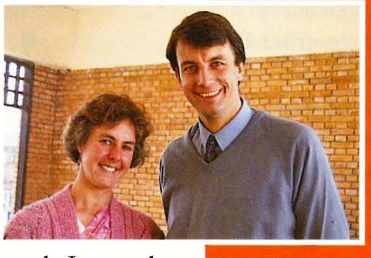
- **for visas!**
- **that Simon and Karen would remain focussed on the task ahead and not be distracted by uncertainties**
- **for the families – the stress of saying goodbye and then finding another deadline passed and they have not gone**

TENTMAKERS INTERNATIONAL

THIS ISSUE WE START A NEW SERIES ON "TENTMAKING MINISTRIES". BUT WHAT IS "TENTMAKING"? **DAVID KERRIGAN** EXPLAINS.

ILLUSRATION SARAH PRENTICE

When the apostle Paul went to Corinth we're told that he stayed with Aquila and Priscilla, because they, like Paul, were tentmakers. He stayed and worked with them, and "every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks." (Acts 18:3,4)



Ian and Sally Smith were medical missionaries in Nepal for 13 years. For the last two years Ian has been seconded to the Nepal government as their national TB advisor, a post co-funded by the British High Commission, the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Government of Nepal. Ian has now been asked to join WHO full-time, in Nepal for now, but later postings could take them anywhere in the world. Is this an end to their missionary service? Ian replies, "From our perspective it certainly isn't the end; it's simply the next stage of our missionary work."

From those early beginnings in Corinth, Christians have often spoken of "tentmakers" as those whose work provides for their daily needs and makes a positive contribution to their community, but who also see the possibilities of christian witness in that place as an integral part of their reason for being there.

In one sense, then, we can all be tentmakers.

Donald and Julie have worked in Brussels for the last four years where Julie is employed by the Government as a translator, and Donald works as a freelance journalist. They are members at Finkwick Baptist Church, and worship in Brussels at a local French-speaking church. In their daily work they are constantly amazed at how often they are able to share their faith with others.

At any one given time there are thousands of UK Christians working overseas in a wide variety of work situations. Some work for international conglomerates; others are self-employed. Some are with national governments, and some are with our own government. Some work in the great cities of the world, whilst many are working and living in isolated, rural settings. Whatever the circumstances, wherever the place, the command is the same: to "Let your light shine before men that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."●

David Kerrigan is BMS Regional Representative for Asia

TAKE 2

Take Two – a resource for church leaders and workers

Burma: statistics

Ranking of Burma in world Human Development Index, 1996:	**133/174**
Infrastructure	
SPDC (formerly SLORC) estimate of "People's contributions" to roads built in 1994/95 (FY):	**33%**
People forced to work on the Pakokku-Monywa section of the Chaung oo-Pakokku Railroad:	**921,753**
Estimated number of households assigned work duties on the Thanbyuzayat Motor Road in Mon State:	**2,600**
People forced to build 100-mile extension for Ye-Tavoy railway:	**200,000**
People forced to work on Bassein Airport extension:	**30,000**
Number of prisoners in all the camps working on the New Kabaw Valley project in Chin State:	**4,000**
Education	
SPDC estimate of "People's contributions" to education in 1994/95 (FY):	**40%**
Number of students attending new schools built since 1989:	**34,322**
Number of school children whose schools were closed for five months by government order:	**7,000,000**
Number of universities which remain closed as of August 1997:	**30**
Total of forced contributions to one new high school built in Thayet Taung township:	**US $11,079** or **1,396,000 kyat**
Agriculture	
SPDC estimate of "People's contributions" to agricultural projects 1994/95 (FY):	**33%**
Number of "agricultural supervisors" whose job it is to ensure that farmers comply with agricultural quotas:	**7,000**
Rice export target set by Burma for 1996:	**1.5 million tons**
Actual rice exports for 1996:	**112,000 tons**
Communications:	
TVs per 1000 people:	**1.9**
TV broadcast stations:	**1**
Radio receivers per 1000 people:	**82**
Prison sentence for operation of an unlicensed satellite television receiver in Burma:	**up to 3 years**
Forests	
Saw mills built by Burma's Forestry Department since 1989:	**12**
Amount villagers were paid in 1996 for cutting one ton of logs in Shan State:	**US $ 2 (250 kyat)**
Traders selling price in 1996 of one ton of logs in Shan State:	**US $ 95 (12,000 kyat)**
Value of Burma's teak exports in 1995/1996:	**US $ 175.2 million**
Health	
One doctor for every:	**12,900 people**
Under five mortality:	**117 per 1,000**
Percentage of population with access to safe water:	**31%**
Defence	
SPDC government defence spending in 1995/1996:	**US $ 155 million**

Figures taken from Burma Issues, August 1997, and Third World Guide

I weep but I weep
not for myself.

I am but one of
hundreds of
thousands
who have suffered
so.

One day our pain
will end.

No, I weep not for
myself, but for those
who do not yet know
that the pain they
create does not
destroy humanity
and dignity.

We shed tears now,
but one day we will
laugh again.

Karen poem, quoted in Jacqui Wells' prayer letter, May 1997

Fair Trade - How you can help

Food

Write to your local supermarket managers with a copy to head office (the local branch will have that address) asking them to stock fairly traded goods. Then buy them.

Timber products

Before you buy furniture or other timber products, check whether it has been made from a renewable resource. If not, write to the company head office and to the manufacturer.

Clothing

Check the country of manufacture. If in doubt, think twice before buying. Try asking the shop manager whether he or she knows the source and write to the company's head office for more information if you don't get a satisfactory answer.

Watch out for these fairly traded products in your supermarket:

Tea

Clipper Sri Lanka Golden
Clipper Nilgiri Blue Mountain
Clipper Earl Grey Nilgiri
Clipper Fairtrade
Seyté Tea
TopQualiTea

Coffee

Percol Fairtrade Nicaragua
Percol Fairtrade Colombia
Percol Fairtrade Latin American
Organic Cafédirect ground
Cafédirect instant
Cafédirect decaffeinated
Equal Exchange organic

Chocolate

Green & Black's Maya Gold

Orange juice

None

More information from:

Christian Aid, Change at the Check-out campaign, PO Box 100, London SE1 7RT. Telephone 0171 620 4444.

Oxfam, Fair Trade Works, 274 Banbury Road, Oxford, OX2 7DZ. Telephone 01865 312603.

The Fairtrade Foundation, 7th Floor Regents House, 89 Kingsway , London, WC2B 6RH. Telephone 0171 405 5942.

Fauna and Flora Preservation Society, 1 Kensington Gore, London, SW7 2AR. Telephone 0171 823 8899.

Tree Aid, 28 Hobbs Lane, Bristol, BS1 5ED. Telephone 0117 934 9442.

Forests Forever, Clareville House, 26/27 Oxendon Street, London, SW1Y 4EL. Telephone 0171 839 1891.

RESOURCES for leaders

CUT & DETATCH

TAKE 2

Take Two – a resource for church leaders and workers

Let Us Pray

Father, forgive us that prayers for justice and peace are so often the prayers we should have prayed but didn't.

Corporate prayer – YOU–ME–GOD – God, who sent his Son to redeem us, and sends his Holy Spirit to empower us,
is HERE.

Father, show us your will and purpose…
– you know my will – I require that you act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with me. *(Micah)*

Lord, let there be peace and justice in the world.
– and let it begin with you, says the Lord.

Lord, for how long will our prayers be blinded by self–interest?
Where are the fruits of justice in Congo?
Where are the signs of peace in Angola?
When will the church be a real instrument of peace and reconciliation in Albania, in Ireland, in Sierra Leone?
When will the wronged be righted in Mozambique, in Brazil?

You question me, says the Lord. Let me ask you some questions.

When will you make justice and peace a priority in your lives, your work and in this missionary society?
You have the seeds of justice and peace in your hands – when will you plant them, water them, tend them?
When will your words give birth to actions?

Father, forgive us for wearying you with our prayers – we have the answers, but lack courage and compassion.

Father, stir our hearts to fight and struggle for justice and make us willing to be hurt, even broken as we promote and nurture peace.

Wilma Aitchison

RESOURCES *for leaders*

Religious freedom in Europe

The following statistics were given at a recent European Baptist Federation Council meeting as to what is happening to Baptists around certain parts of Europe and the Middle East.

Former EBF President Theo Angelov has appealed to all European Baptists to be aware of human rights abuses hindering the ministries of Baptists and others. "A new wave of restrictions is coming. It is a spirit coming against us," he said. Writing letters, meeting with representatives from the traditional churches, and other such initiatives are necessary, but not enough. Baptists need to be more active and influential on the local government and parliamentary levels, he said. Government leaders "understand the hard language of political pressure,". And above all, pray. (EBPS)

Country	Baptist Union Churches	Members	Situation
AZERBAIJAN	15	520	A jailed pastor has been released. Situation quiet at the moment.
KIRGHIZSTAN	33	3,118	Young Kirghiz churches under a lot of pressure. Some buildings have been closed. There is a law in preparation to put pressure on non-state religious groups.
RUSSIA	1,200	92,000	President Boris Yeltsin has signed a revised version of a law limiting religious freedom that is worse than the version he earlier vetoed ostensibly because of its unfair limits on some religious groups. In 35 regions of Russia laws are being considered limiting street evangelism and activities of non-Russian Christians such as missionaries.
GEORGIA	49	5,000	A new law on the church and state will come up this winter. Believers are struggling and suffering. Books such as Billy Graham's writings, a Children's Bible, New Testament charts, and parts of the New Testament have been burnt on the grounds that they are undesirable and dangerous reading material.
ARMENIA	25	900	Described as "a brighter spot on the human rights map." Baptists and other evangelicals have friendly relations with the Apostolic Church, and there is no serious persecution from either the Orthodox Church or the government. Catholics, evangelicals and others are identified as "traditional" groups.
ISRAEL	12	923	There is a proposed law which will greatly restrict any attempts to evangelise, though Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has assured evangelicals that he will not sign such a law. His government, however, is seen as dependent on the ultra-orthodox Jewish political representa tives in the legislature.
LEBANON	19	1,114	There is both pressure on and persecution of Christians in the multi-religious land of Lebanon. Pressure is applied in local situations to delay or stop evangelical groups from growing and getting adequate buildings in which to meet.
MACEDONIA	3	150	Provisions of a law passed July 1997 are very restrictive and fines levied against those who break the new laws are very high. If anything, the situation is worse now than in Communist times. Baptists have been among the most vocal advocates for religious freedom. One legislator said, "Send a bulldozer and level the Baptists." Special police approval is now required to receive Bible translations in English and other Christian material.

CUT & DETATCH

ILLUSTRATION SARAH PRENTICE

The WAY I SEE IT

AT THE HEART OF THEIR WORLD–WIDE MISSION STRATEGY, ALONGSIDE DIRECT EVANGELISM, BRITISH BAPTISTS HAVE ALWAYS PLACED MEETING PHYSICAL NEEDS AND, IF NECESSARY, CAMPAIGNING ON THE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CAUSES OF THOSE NEEDS. SOME OF OUR MISSION PARTNERS HOWEVER MAY HAVE DIFFERENT PRIORITIES, AS REVEALED IN THIS EXTRACT FROM THE PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE OF **PHILIP CLEMENTS–JEWERY**.

Dear Philip

I write in Christian love to suggest that your concern for social issues and for justice and peace is a distraction from the vital task of evangelism. As we see it here in Brazil, the urgent necessity is to win souls for Christ. Millions of our fellow Brazilians live in darkness and error and have never heard the real message of salvation. There is a spiritual vacuum in our country which is rapidly being filled by spiritist cults. That's why we believe that preaching the gospel is the only thing that matters.

Your brother in Christ.
Joao

Dear Joao

Thank you for your letter. I very much admire the evangelistic zeal of Brazilian Baptists and I am sure that we here in Britain have much to learn from you. But I am also sure that a concern for justice and peace is not a departure from the gospel and belongs alongside the presentation of Christ as Saviour. In the gospels, Jesus himself not only preached and taught, he also demonstrated in signs the presence of God's kingdom reflecting the very clear 'bias to the poor' that is attributed to God in scripture.

Yours in Christ
Philip

Dear Philip

I understand what you are saying but we are also sure that the Lord is coming soon and that if people have not accepted him by then, it will be too late when he returns. The material conditions under which people have lived on earth are utterly insignificant in comparison with the possibility of an eternity without Christ. It's because we want to stop people going to hell that we concentrate 100 per cent on evangelism. I also think that the way you talk about a 'bias to the poor' concedes too much to the error of Communism.

In Christian love.
Joao

Dear Joao

The Bible teaches us that God wants justice and righteousness on earth as well as the salvation of our souls. I'm sorry if you think that sounds like Marxist teaching. As Creator, God gave us bodies and put us in communities as well as giving us souls and spirits. It's for reasons like these, and more, that the BMS has put justice and peace alongside other concerns at the heart of its missionary strategy. A purely spiritual gospel can be too easy. Christ certainly comforted the disturbed, but what he said and did was also very disturbing for people who were too comfortable.

Yours in the service of the Gospel.
Philip

What do you think? Take part in this debate. Write to us in about 120 words:BMS, Baptist House, 129 Broadway, Didcot, Oxon, OX11 8XA or Email: mail@bms.org.uk

Action Card

Racial Justice

Since the 1950s, Britain has been developing into a multi–cultural and multi–religious society. People have come into the country mainly from the Caribbean, Africa and Asia because they were invited for work or because they were offered asylum or refuge from troubles in their countries of origin. At first, many immigrants intended to be in Britain temporarily, but their children were born here and they have become committed to work and life in Britain.

Many people enjoy living in multi–cultural Britain, but others find it difficult. A very recent story is told by a black church leader, of meeting for many years with his people in the afternoons in a London church where the congregation was white. He noticed that the members of the church celebrated One World Week every year and finally, one year, he decided to go to their service which was held in the mornings. As the announcement of One World Week was made, he stood up and said, "We are here."

The challenge in living in late 20th Century Britain is the challenge to live with the reality of a mixed society and to build up authentic community amongst the different races. it is vital that people who have enjoyed learning from those who are racially different should help others to overcome their prejudices and fears, by offering opportunities for people to meet each other, through the churches, and in their homes. There is also the responsibility to work for justice in society, equality in education, equal treatment for people from all races when they apply for citizenship and for opportunities in work. Send your card to The Centres for Black and White Christian Partnership, Selly Oak Colleges, Bristol Road, Birmingham, B29 6LQ. Encourage the work being done and if you would like to know more, do ask for information.

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Do you have any of the following that you no longer need ?

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antique books
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scientific instruments

clocks
old dolls, toys
linen
Victoriana
stamps
coins and medals

Provisional auction dates for 1998 are:

5 & 6	March
23 & 24	April
18 & 19	June
17 & 18	Sept
26 & 27	Nov

Goods like these are donated to Wallington Missionary Auctions every year. They are then sold on the donor's behalf and the money raised goes to support the work of Missionary Societies.

Last year BMS received £3,400 through the sale of goods at these auctions.

For more details write to: Wallington Missionary Auctions, 105 Stafford Road, Wallington, Surrey SM6 9AP. Wallington Missionary Auctions is operated by Wallington Missionary Mart & Auctions, a Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee. UK Reg No. 1797729 VAT No 218 3855 51.

BARNABAS PROJECT

SHORT-TERM OPPORTUNITIES

Nepal
Teachers of all subjects required for Kathmandu Study Centre, an international school for the children of missionaries and other expatriates.

Albania
Craft project manager/trainer required for six to nine months in Bregu-i-Lumit, a village five miles from Tirana, helping to put an income generating project on to a solid business footing. The ideal person must have business training and marketing skills, knowledge of import/export and an ability to judge the quality of work in areas of knitting, embroidery, crochet etc. They must also be a Christian, willing to share their faith in appropriate ways.

India
People with skills in building, surveying and architecture urgently required in Mizoram, North India to answer an SOS by Baptist World Aid. The area has suffered floods and landslides and has asked for a team to give advice on safe housing and site selection.

For further information, please contact Carolyn Cole, BMS Volunteer Co-ordinator. Tel 01235 512077

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Checkout

Missionary Movements

JANUARY	FEBRUARY
Arrivals	**Arrivals**
none	John and Maria Dyer from Penha
Departures	**Departures**
Andrew and Michelle Furber to Tansen	Tim and Rosimar Deller to Goiânia
Colin and Denise Clark to Pokhara	Stan and Maureen Porter to Sao Paulo
David and Sheila Brown to Rio de Janeiro	
John and Rena Mellor to Kinshasa	

ILLUSTRATION BY SARAH PRENTICE

GERRY MYHILL

Gerry Myhill is a BMS missionary working in Antonina, Brazil

One has to climb several hundred feet up the side of a mountain to reach Dona Francelina's house, in the village of Eufrasina. It isn't really very far from the village centre, nor from the Baptist church, but it is a haven of peace. The only sounds to be heard are the songs of the birds in the trees, Dona Francelina's chatter, and her husband Sebastião's laughter. I am not able to visit them as often as I would like, and even though there is little physical comfort, I always come away refreshed both in body and spirit.

Their house is not really much more than a shelter made of wood branches, with more gaps than wood; however, it has meant shelter and security to them, to their many children and grandchildren, and also to countless cats, dogs, chickens and ducks, which come and go as they please. What makes their home special is the constant awareness of God's presence and love.

'Their house is not really much more than a shelter made of wood branches, with more gaps than wood.'

One Sunday, Francelina was celebrating her birthday, and many people visited her home to express to her their birthday greetings, and to enjoy a dish of canjica. Canjica consists of white maize boiled with milk, sugar, and either grated coconut or ground peanuts. We sang and prayed, asking God's continued blessing upon Francelina, after which she made herself busy, dishing out endless bowls of canjica. A large bowl of sugar was placed in the centre of the table for those who required extra sweetening, while all available spoons were stuck in the sugar. Those who finished eating their canjica were expected to replace their spoons in the sugar for others to use. Washing up was kept to a minimum due to the fact that all water had to be carried up the hillside in buckets.

Because I am their pastor, I was privileged with a seat at the table, and I watched, fascinated, the two ladies opposite me who were so absorbed in their conversation that they didn't notice the chicken which calmly stepped into the middle of their bowls, tucking in. When finally one of the ladies did notice, she let out such a scream that the startled chicken took off, flapping its wings, and splatting everybody and everything with canjica, while leaving two lovely black footprints in the bowl. With all the calm in the world, Dona Francelina simply dipped the ladle once more into the cauldron and refilled the bowl. Footprints forgotten, the party continued.

Shortly afterwards one of the daughters appeared with a huge cake which was placed on the table in front of me. I was asked to pray again, and thinking it might be wise to get on with it before the chickens returned, I hastily rose to my feet, only to discover that I had been sitting right underneath one of the beams which supports the roof! My prayer was probably one of the briefest ever, and was uttered amid a shower of celestial bodies.

Now when people ask me to pray, I carefully examine my surroundings before rising.

And if there are chickens present, I keep one eye on them.

BMS Relief FUND

When a disaster strikes there's no time to arrange an appeal for funds to help victims. They require our support and money instantly.

So give money now in order that when a disaster strikes, and that could be tomorrow, BMS - with your help - can step in immediately.

Give now so BMS can act later.

'Give generously to him, and do so without a grudging heart.'

(Deut. 15:10)

PHOTO: PA NEWS

BMS Compassion *in Action*

CUT & DETATCH

I want to give my money now, so that BMS can act later

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£100 ❑ £250* ❑ Other ❑

for the BMS Relief Fund.

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Address _____

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Postcode _____ Church _____

* We can make this up to £324 reclaiming tax through Gift Aid.

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MARCH/APRIL 1998

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INTERNATIONAL

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Church planting in Bangkok

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1998

the challenge of urban mission

a piece of the ACTiON

tour

BMS 1997/98 Action Teams newly returned from near and far - visiting a place near you!
Young people excited with all that God has done, with stories to tell, songs to sing, prayers to pray.
Give them a miss only if you really can't be bothered to know how God is working in people's lives today - all over the world.

North and Mid Wales

☎ Delyth Wyn Davies 01766 512957 or Fiona Pimlott 01235 512077

Region	Action Team	Venue/Contact	Date
Mid Wales	France	☎ Sue and David Wilson 01544 267456	27 April - 4 May
Rhos Wrecsam	Italy	☎ Revd Owain Llyr Evans 01978 842504	27 April - 4 May
Rhyl	UK	Sussex Street Church ☎ Revd Ian Fulcher 01745 330893	4-11 May
Mid Wales	Zimbabwe	☎ Sue and David Wilson 01544 267456	11-18 May
Bangor	India	☎ Revd Olaf Davies 01248 364613	8-15 June

South Wales

☎ Gareth Hutchinson 01792 360909

Cardiff	Thailand	☎ Miss Beryl Davies 01222 756426	4 - 11 May
TBA	UK		11 - 18 May
Pembrokeshire	Zimbabwe	☎ Mrs Betty Smith 01437 751226	18 - 25 May
Magor	Brazil	☎ Revd Richard Nias 01633 880450	25 May - 1 June
Carmarthen	France	☎ Revd Geraint Morse 01269 842103	8 -15 June
Abercynon	India	☎ Mrs Terry Hubbard 01443 740651	15 - 22 June

London and South East

☎ Fiona Pimlott 01235 512077

Region	Action Team	Venue/Contact	Date
Kent	India	☎ Revd Graham Thomson 01303 252916	27 April - 3 May
London	India	N. Region & New Beavan BC, Barnet ☎ Revd Peter Wood 0181 449 4605	4 - 10 May
London	Italy	Western Region & Hillingdon Park BC ☎ Mrs Dee Lacey 01895 632848	11 - 17 May
West Sussex	Thailand	Broadwater BC, Worthing ☎ Revd David Hill 01903 210438	18 - 24 May
London	Zimbabwe	Southborough Lane BC, Bromley ☎ Mr Jonathan Coles 01689 89017	25 May - 1 June
London	UK	N.E Region & Goodmayes BC ☎ Revd Neil Harding 0181 590 2468	25 May - 1 June
Kent	France	☎ Revd Graham Thomson 01303 252916	1 - 7 June
East Sussex	Zimbabwe	Downs Free Church, Woodingdean ☎ Revd Graham Horsnell 01273 691802	1 - 7 June
London	Portugal	N.W Region & Ruislip BC ☎ Miss Margaret Hoare 01895 634385	8 - 14 June

South and West

☎ Phil Hindle 01823 698977

Wokingham	Thailand	☎ Mr Tim Jinkerson 0118 932 8418	27 April - 4 May
Kidlington	Italy	☎ Mrs Jill Davies 01865 373633	4-11 May
Chalk Group	Thailand	☎ Revd Laurie Burn 01297 33385	11 - 18 May
Chalford	Brazil	☎ Mrs Yvonne Hobbs 01453 884778	11 - 18 May
Bournemouth	UK	☎ Mr Eddie Foster 01202 659059	18 - 25 May
Taunton	Brazil	☎ Revd Edwin Penman 01823 326353	18 - 25 May
Barnstaple	Portugal	☎ Revd C K Sykes 01271 321668	25 May - 1 June
Torquay	Portugal	☎ Miss Mary Metherall 01803 521133	1 - 8 June
Taunton	Italy	☎ Revd Edwin Penman 01823 326353	15 - 22 June
Torrington	France	Torrington BC ☎ Mrs Loraine Eade 01805 626260	15 - 16 June
Torrington	France	Immanuel BC ☎ Mrs Sue Godfrey 01326 315249	17 -22 June

North

☎ Cath Mawson 01274 487341

Hull	UK	☎ Mike Mooney	27 April - 4 May
Sheffield	Zimbabwe	☎ Revd Alan Cooper	4 - 11 May
Middlesbrough	France	☎ Mr G Thomas	11 - 18 May
Durham	India	☎ Revd John Claydon	18 - 25 May
TBA	Portugal		18 - 25th May
TBA	India		25 May - 1 June
Middlesbrough	India	☎ Revd Graham Brownlee	1 - 8 June
Bishop Auckland	Italy	☎ John Smallwood	8 - 15 June
Lumb	Thailand	☎ Ian Rimmer	15 - 22 June

Central and Eastern

☎ Jim Clarke 01353 778984

Frinton	Brazil	☎ Miss Margaret Smith 01255 815103	27 April - 4 May
Hoddesdon	Brazil	☎ Mrs Christine Molyneux 01920 870103	8 -15 June
Southend	India	☎ Revd Roger Martin 01702 471010	11 - 18 May
Norwich	Italy	☎ Revd Jim Clarke 01353 778984	18 - 25 May
Saffron Walden	Thailand	Mrs Esme Moon 01799 522629	25 May - 1 June
High Wycombe	France	☎ Mrs Carolyn Leonard 01628 526512	25 May - 1 June
Northampton	UK	☎ Miss Margaret Smith 01604 710727	1 - 8 June
Northants	Zimbabwe	☎ Mr Hugh Munro 01933 358238	8 - 15 June
Chelmsford	Portugal	☎ Mr Hedley Missen 01245 257936	15 - 22 June

Midlands

☎ Theo Lambourne 0116 271 3633

TBA	Portugal		27 Apr - 4 May
TBA	Portugal		4-11 May
TBA	Brazil		4-11 May
Potteries	France	☎ Revd David Reast 01782 710770 (Sunday at Leamington Spa BC)	18-25 May
TBA	Italy		25 May - 1 June
Bilston	Thailand	☎ Derek Duke 01902 842428	1-8 Jun
TBA	UK		8-15 June
Leicester	Zimbabwe	☎ John & Shirley Russell 0116 241 6299	15-22 June

Scotland

☎ Derek Clark 0141 775 1201

Montrose	Zimbabwe		27 Apr - 4 May
Hamilton	France		4 - 11 May
TBA	Portugal		11 - 18 May
Aberdeen	Italy		1 - 8 June
Edinburgh	Thailand		8 - 15 June
Pittenweem	Brazil		15 - 22 June
TBA	UK		15 - 22 June

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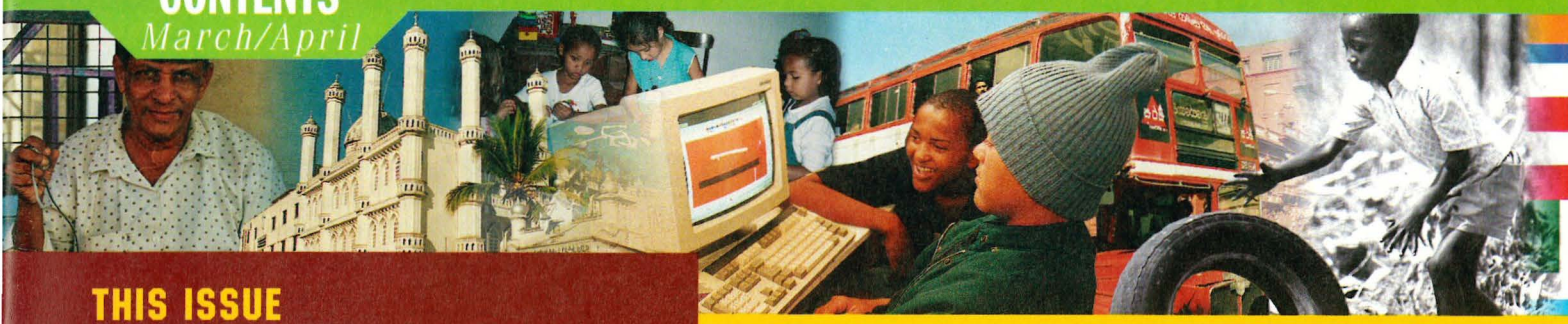


THIS ISSUE
URBAN MISSION

Jan Kendall

I am one of the 11 per cent of people in Britain today who live in the country. I have to admit that I love my village: the peace and quiet, the sense of neighbourliness, the open spaces and spectacular views, and the fact that it's comparatively crime-free.

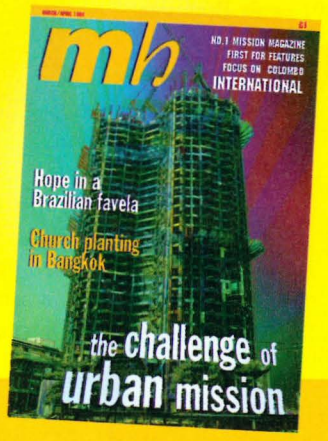
The possibility of being able to live in an environment like that is on a global scale decreasing as more and more of the world's population is finding itself in an urban setting. Space, privacy, serenity are all luxuries that are becoming more and more elusive.

It's funny the things you remember from your childhood, isn't it? I have a very distinct memory of sitting in church one Sunday, when my minister interviewed one of our church members who was about to leave our nice, middle-class neighbourhood, because he believed God was calling him to live and work in the inner city. The church member read a poem that he had recently come across, which had enforced God's calling to him. The core line was (something like): I wanted to live in the country, but God said "Go to the town."

This issue is looking at the challenge of urban mission. If we've grown up with images of missionaries stalking the jungles with their pith helmets, it's easy to overlook the fact that most missionaries today are working in urban settings. They are still at the forefront of mission, still often in pioneering situations, but they, like those around them, are living in tower blocks, interacting with their multi-cultural neighbours, and seeing life in all its seaminess.

On a different note, thank you to all who have written in to say how much you like *mb*. We enjoy reading your letters, so please keep them coming in,

Jan



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LOOKING AT LIFE AND DEATH

News

Romania

Romanian President Emil Constantinescu and Prime Minister Victor Ciorbea were able to assure Baptist leaders of their commitment to religious freedom in Romania at a meeting in the capital Bucharest. They also apologised for the beating of Baptists in Ruginoasa last Easter. (BWA News)

Norway

What is believed to be the most northerly Baptist church in the world has just been established in the North Cap (Nordkapp) area of the Arctic Circle. The North Cap Baptist Church has been founded with 20 members in Honningsveg, a fishing village with 3,000 residents in the north of Norway. (EBPS)

United Arab Emirates

The recent 34th Annual Meeting of the European Baptist Convention voted to extend its boundaries by accepting the Emirates Baptist Church International, Dubai, United Arab Emirates into full membership in the Convention. Interim pastor Gary Hawkins said: "Our church is not in Europe, but Europe is in the UAE." (EBPS)

Uzbekistan

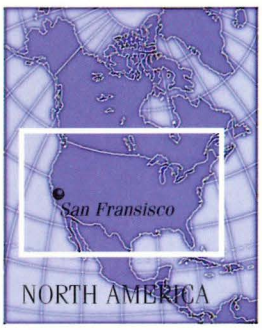
A newspaper article in Uzbekistan has accused, without any substantiation, some religious movements and sects - with Baptists being specifically cited - of harmful activity against their homeland, including damage to the national ideology, violence, bribery and destruction of families.
This article has prompted believers in the former Soviet republic to challenge the misrepresentations and falsehoods. (EBPS)

Mexico

Two Christian workers were attacked in the Baptist book shop in Mexico City during an armed robbery. This is the latest of several robberies of churches. (Open Doors)

News in Brief

United States "Bucket Brigades" win friends

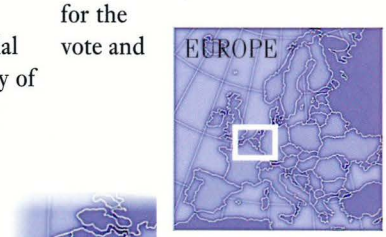


Young Christians armed only with buckets and cleaning supplies made a lasting impression on San Francisco's notorious Tenderloin district, during a nine week urban missions programme.

Nicknamed "the bucket brigades", the young participants all aged between 13 and 21, drawn from churches in California, Washington and Oregon, tidied up pavements, washed shop windows and cleaned shop premises for local traders and residents in this area renowned for drug dealing, prostitution and violence. They also took part in outreach to youngsters living on the streets, gave evangelistic dramas and

Belgium Official recognition for Baptists

The Union of Baptists in Belgium has received official recognition as a community of faith in its homeland after years of prayer, struggle, meetings, and letter-writing campaigns. In December 1997 the Protestant Synod, the only Protestant group recognised by the Belgian government, voted unanimously to bring Baptists into membership. The Union President, Samuel Verhaeghe, said: "We are recognised as a full Protestant Baptist Church now. The Attaché from the Minister of Justice was there for the vote and congratulated us at the end. Thank you everybody who prayed, wrote letters and did anything to help us on this matter." (EBPS)



Samuel Verhaeghe

offered their services to other Christian agencies working in the area. "Many of them had never witnessed to someone in the street before and were a bit afraid of the city," said YWAM director Lori Matthias.

Not everyone accepted the offer of free help. "Some people were suspicious, because they couldn't believe someone would want to do something for nothing, but others were really touched," said Matthias. "One young man washed the feet of the homeless men waiting in a nearby food line."

A drug dealer was so impressed by the way a small group cleaned up the street corner from where he operated that he bought each member a soft drink as a thank-you.

The clean-up crews handed out leaflets explaining their free services were being offered to demonstrate God's love.

> "The clean-up crews handed out leaflets explaining their free services were being offered to demonstrate God's love."

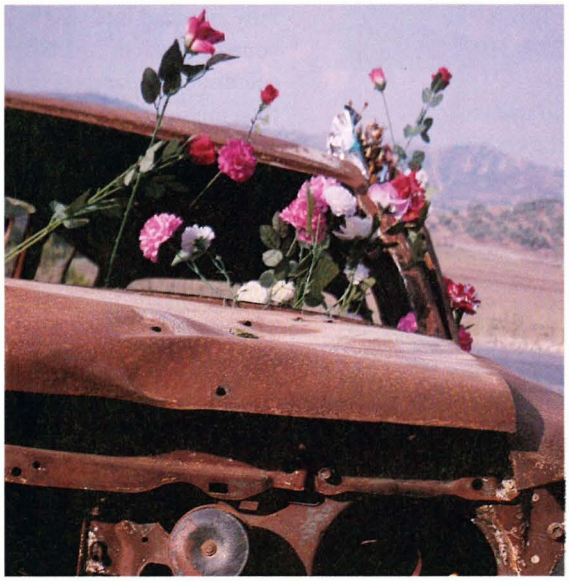
This short-term youth programme was intended to introduce young Christians to urban ministry, and "take away some of the fear many people have about the city," said Matthias. "It's exciting to see them go back and put into practice in their own communities some of the things they have learned." (YWAM News)

Alistair Brown

Jesus, Light to the World

A burned out car lies at the side of an Albanian road. Lots of wrecked cars scar the Albanian countryside, but this one's different. It's bedecked with flowers, and a candle burns in the hole which once held the headlight. Three people died in that car last March during the riots when the ammunition they were carrying exploded.

These weren't guiltless people, but they were husbands,



brothers and fathers loved by people who so miss them that they light a candle in that abandoned car every day.

Never let us forget that war, famine, flood, earthquake, poverty and the rest of the world's troubles hurt real people. They're flesh and blood, wanted and needed, just like those for whom we care. God grant us compassion to help and courage to act to ease pain and bring hope to this broken world. ●

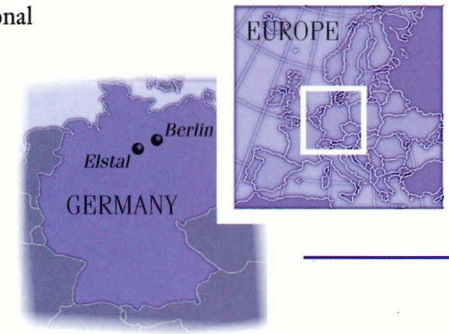
Germany
New Baptist seminary on Soviet Army site

A new Baptist educational complex comprising a seminary for 65 students, a Bible school, counselling and youth work centre, and 150 flats for the elderly, has been dedicated as the first part of this building project reached completion.

The complex is located in Elstal, 30 km west of Berlin in the former East Germany. The German seminary had previously been in Hamburg, but the need for increased space prompted the move to this 12 hectare site. The campus is a prime example of military conversion, with "swords being turned into ploughshares." The site was begun by the Nazi Air Force, used by athletes during the 1936 Olympics and belonged to the Soviet Army from 1945 to 1991.

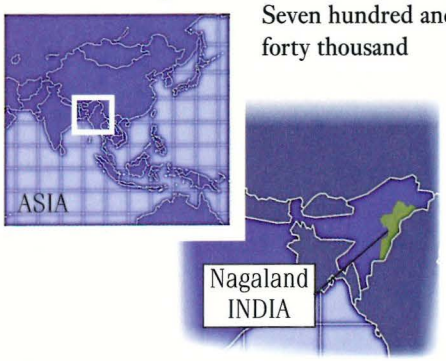
> "The site was used by athletes during the 1936 Olympics"

The rebuilding of 19 houses and construction of four new educational buildings occurred in record time: initial contracts were signed only three years ago. Roughly 450 volunteers from Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus, Russia and Kazakhstan, and 300 from the USA have worked at the site since March 1995.



Revd Eckhard Schaefer, General Secretary of the German Baptists hopes that Elstal will become a major "exporter" of German-language theological education. Negotiations are underway with Baptist institutions in Britain for their degrees to be accredited, thus allowing the seminary to be internationally recognised.

Nagaland, India 12,000 turn to Christ



Seven hundred and forty thousand people attended six celebration services for the 125th anniversary of Baptist work in Nagaland - a state of north east India. More than 12,000 people responded to the appeal of Baptist World Alliance President Nilson Fanini to give their lives to Christ in a special evangelistic meeting. Tony Cupitt, BWA Evangelism director spoke at a rally attended by 75,000 young people, in which thirty committed themselves to full-time missionary service.

Prior to the Naga events, Cupitt led a ten-person team to Andhra Pradesh, and conducted evangelistic rallies where about 600 people made professions of faith.

In Vijayawada and Narasaraopet the team saw - and on some occasions were able to speak at - ministries to prisoners, orphans, handicapped young people and people with leprosy. They also held medical clinics and saw a new CIM x-ray unit, given to the Baptist hospital at Nellore by Baptist World Aid. (BWA News)

"...thirty committed themselves to full-time missionary service."

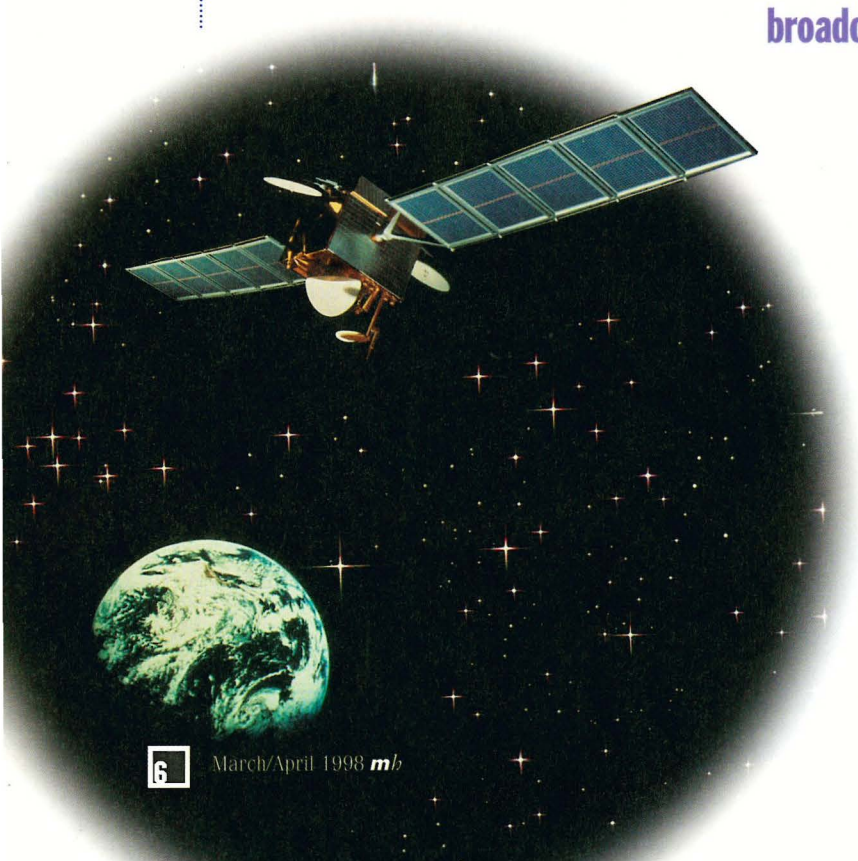
SAT-7 increase broadcast time

SAT-7, the satellite television service for the Middle East and North Africa has nearly quadrupled its number of broadcast hours per week in just 18 months of broadcasting.

The service began in May 1996 broadcasting for just two hours a week on a Friday, in Arabic, using the satellite Eutelsat 2F3, which covers Europe, the Central Middle East and North Africa. At the end of April 1997 the same programmes were being broadcast at the same times on another satellite system, PanAmSat 4, whose 'footprint' covers Southern Asia, the Arabian peninsula and much of Europe. Now the normal Friday broadcasts are complemented by a 2½ hour transmission on Sundays, the weekend holiday in Europe and some Arabic-speaking countries. This brings the total broadcasting time to 7½ hours per week.

During 1997 thousands responded very positively to the broadcasts. But "the one complaint we still get from everyone is that we do not yet broadcast a daily service," reported Makram Barsoum, SAT-7's Church and Audience Relations Director. (SAT-7)

"During 1997 thousands responded very positively to the broadcasts."



PHOTOGRAPH:
BT CORPORATE PICTURES

SOON - Internet outreach hits half million

SOON Gospel Literature, the Derby-based literature ministry report that since they launched their evangelistic on-line Web magazine a year ago (http://www.soon.org.uk), their pages have been accessed half a million times. Often 1,500 people visit this Web site each day from a range of countries.

Convinced that the Internet represents an opportunity which Christians are not yet fully exploiting for the gospel, SOON have produced a "how-to" guide on using the Web for evangelism at: http://www.brigada.org/today/articles/web evangelism.html

The guide covers: learning more about the Internet, how Internet evangelism differs from the printed page, how to exploit "search engines" to bring visitors to your site, using "newsgroups" to witness, and many links to other web resources.

SOON say, "If only someone had given us such a guide a year ago! We don't want others to spend a year reinventing the wheel." They believe that Internet outreach is a vital tool for the church, and can be used by anyone, not just evangelistic organisations. (SOON)

"Often 1,500 people visit this Web site each day..."

Inspiration, motivation, ideas, news on world mission for churches

World Mission Link

Paul, Eleanor, Nathan, Robert and Ruth collecting coins for BMS work in Brazil

Ena and George from Bridgwater Baptist Church, serving lunch at the BMS fayre ▼

Well Done, Bridgwater!

Members of Bridgwater Baptist Church raised £1,508 for their BMS PIPS project, supporting a well-baby clinic in Sao Paulo, Brazil in a fayre they held in December. They served coffee and lunches, and had stalls run by different organisations. The young people also joined in with their own endeavour – seeing if they could fill a map of Brazil with coins.

TAKE THE RISK UK TOUR

A challenging and fast moving multi-media evening presentation which aims to portray the world that God created, and bring to life the real world that we live in today. It will show how Christians can make a difference and issue the challenge to 'take more risks for Christ'.

Take the Risk is for people in their 20s, 30s and early 40s, although those outside this age range will enjoy it. It will consist of live music from ex-Eden Burning musicians, drama directed by Rob Lacey, speaking from Martin Pearse (BMS President 1997 - 98), large screen video and live links with different parts of the world.

It will be happening in 16 venues throughout the UK in the autumn of 1998.

For more details contact your BMS Co-ordinator, or ring Katrina Dando at BMS on 01235 512077.

Risk it and ring!

Coming your way in September and October (revised dates)

- Birmingham
- Cardiff
- Cheltenham
- Colchester
- Edinburgh
- Glasgow
- Kent
- Leeds
- Liverpool
- London SW
- Manchester
- Newcastle
- Nottingham
- Plymouth
- Southampton
- Watford

Church Walks for Blind Girls

Children in the Sunday School at Astley Bridge Baptist Church, near Bolton were really impressed when former BMS missionary Valerie Hamilton and her sister Eleanor visited them. Valerie and Eleanor spoke about Bangladesh where Valerie had worked, and in particular, the School for Blind Girls in Dhaka. They were so impressed that they knew they could not forget about the blind girls, and so immediately they decided to hold a sponsored walk to raise money for the School.

The event took place a few weeks later, raising £135.

Dates for your Diary

Events & Meetings

Glasgow
Mon 9 March
Women's Missionary Fellowship
Adelaide Place Baptist Church, Glasgow
More information - Jan Watson 0141 882 1201

Airdrie
Tues 10 March
Lanarkshire BMS Women's Rally
Airdrie Baptist Church
More information - Betty Brown 01236 429450

Cardiff
Sat 14 and Sun 15 March
Cardiff Auxiliary BMS Weekend
Saturday venue: Bethany Rhiwbina
More information - Beryl Davies 01222 756426

St Andrews
Fri 27 - Sun 29 March
Scottish BMM Conference
More information - Tom Barrie 01292 261215

St Andrews
Fri 27 - Mon 30 March
Scottish Women's Auxiliary Annual Conference
More information - Margaret Brown - 01294 465886

Glasgow
Mon 20 April
Women's Missionary Fellowship
Adelaide Place Baptist Church, Glasgow
More information - Jan Watson 0141 882 1201

Some of Astley Bridge Sunday School members and friends taking a well-earned rest along the way ▼

News

Simon & Karen Collins

Simon and Karen did not depart for Angola in June 1997 as had been hoped - and publicised - because their visas did not arrive.

Seven months later they were still in the UK.

How have they coped with the waiting?

Simon says: "As you can imagine, the past few months have been frustrating. On several occasions we became increasingly excited as the date for our flight to Angola approached, only to realise as yet another deadline passed with still no sign of the visas, that we would not be leaving again. Three fortnights in a row we spent the weekend with Karen's parents, saying our emotional goodbyes for the last time for two years - only to be still here the following week!"

While they continue to wait Simon, a doctor, is doing locum work in the Birmingham area and Karen, a teacher, is studying at St Andrews Hall.

Simon & Karen Collins (top); Paul & Elisabeth Towlson (below)

Towlsons Return to Albania

BMS missionaries are gradually returning to Albania. Last year Paul Towlson returned to Durres, the main port, where he is teaching in the Albanian Bible Institute. In early January the rest of his family: Elisabeth, his wife, and children Jessica, Michael, Evelyn and Philip were able to join him there.

Glyn & Gill Jones: Retired but not Tired Out

Glyn & Gill have left Albania for the last time as they start a new phase of their lives in retirement in the UK. They came to serve with BMS in 1993 with Gill working in the European Baptist Federation Albania Office in Tirana. Glyn, an agricultural scientist, helped the Albanian people grow new products such as peanuts and sweetcorn, and assisted with seed distribution. Sadly a lot of his research work was destroyed in the civil war a year ago.

After a short break they plan to visit their Link churches, and after that, who knows what God has in store for them?

Gill & Glyn Jones

News in Brief

Electrifying Experience for Dave Palmer

Satellite engineer and BMS volunteer consultant Dave Palmer has recently returned to the UK after the first of four trips undertaken to the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire), in which he has started much needed repair work on the country's dilapidated communications network.

All infrastructure and internal communications within DRC have gradually disintegrated in the 30 or so years since the country gained its independence from Belgium. Last year's war which ousted Mobutu and put Kabila in charge of the country's affairs destroyed any vestige of communication links within the country. All that is left is e-mail for the fortunate few (power supplies permitting) and short wave radio.

Dave hopes he will make a difference to thousands of peoples' lives by maintaining and improving existing equipment and building relationships with BMS's partner body, CBFC.

Dave made his first trip accompanied by veteran communications engineer John Corbett, for whom the journey to DRC will probably

BMS at the Baptist Assembly

Make a note of these events NOW and plan to be at them!

Sat 2 May
Stand by Me
2.00 - 3.15 pm
A seminar led by Fiona Pimlott, BMS Youth and Children's Co-ordinator.
How much support do you give your young people in their day to day Christian lives?
Or in their crises?
Their ups and downs?
Their stepping out in faith for God, and holding back in fear?
How much do you encourage them to "go for God"?
A sizzling, envigorating seminar which will help you motivate your young people and in the process, will send exciting shivers down your spine!

Sat 2 May
Ten ways to make World Mission a higher priority in your church
3.45 - 5.00 pm
A seminar led by Cath Mawson and Theo Lambourne, BMS Co-ordinators for the North of England and Midlands.
Back by popular demand this seminar will help you to promote world mission, generating interesting ideas and generally making mission go with a bang in your church.

Sat 2 May
World Mission Celebration
7.15 - 9.15 pm
Don't miss this special evening with the Bishop of Maidstone, Rt Revd Gavin Reid!

1 - 4 May 1998
Baptist Assembly 1998
In Step with the Spirit
Norbreck Castle Hotel, Blackpool

For further information on registering please contact the Assembly Office, Baptist House, PO Box 49, Didcot, OX11 8XA. Tel 01235 512077

be his last.

They arrived in Kinshasa to a bombardment of rockets and shells - it being the day after war had been declared on Brazzaville, across the River Congo in the People's Republic of Congo.

The objectives of this trip were to install some new aerials, return and install repaired radios, repair solar electric battery chargers and general maintenance.

Radios are used daily by the CBFC as they are the only means of communication along the 1,200 mile long river. The radio at Yakambo Koi was repaired after surviving falling into the river whilst being carried on the head of the pastor's daughter, and then buried in the forest before the arrival of retreating Zairean troops.

Having repaired the satellite e-mail system, massive and unexpected lightening wrecked computers and other electronic equipment, and also took out the e-mail. All communications with the outside world were temporarily suspended! This was the same satellite e-mail system that had been shipped out to Kinshasa during the 1995 Ebola virus outbreak.

All in all, the trip achieved most of its objectives, with extra excitement thrown in! At one point Dave was held at gun-point by soldiers who demanded all his money! John reckoned that the six weeks were a good introduction to life in the Congo for him.

"All communications with the outside world were temporarily suspended!"

Dave is a member of Redhill Baptist Church.

Over the next two years he will make another three trips to DRC, returning home to his wife and children to undertake project development. He has already had plenty of ideas, and hopes to get university funding to develop a complete satellite system that will fit into a briefcase.

Baptist House News

Welcome to

Simon Jones

Simon is the latest addition to the team of BMS Co-ordinators. He joins BMS on 2 March as the new Co-ordinator for London and the South East, having worked as Editor of Christianity magazine, and before that as pastor of Peckham Park Road Baptist Church.

Simon is raring to go in his new job. "I'm really looking forward to starting work" he said; "it's a very exciting role!"

Update

Andy Smith

Andy returned to his job as Audio-Visual and Projects Co-ordinator at BMS full-time in January 1998, having been seriously ill with cancer and a stroke over much of 1997. He still needs monthly hospital check-ups and occasional brain scans, and movement has not come back fully to his right hand side yet. But to everyone who visited him while he was so ill in hospital, he is a walking miracle. "It's marvellous to be back!" he said, and it's marvellous to have him back. Please continue to remember Andy and his family in your prayers.

Life in Retirement

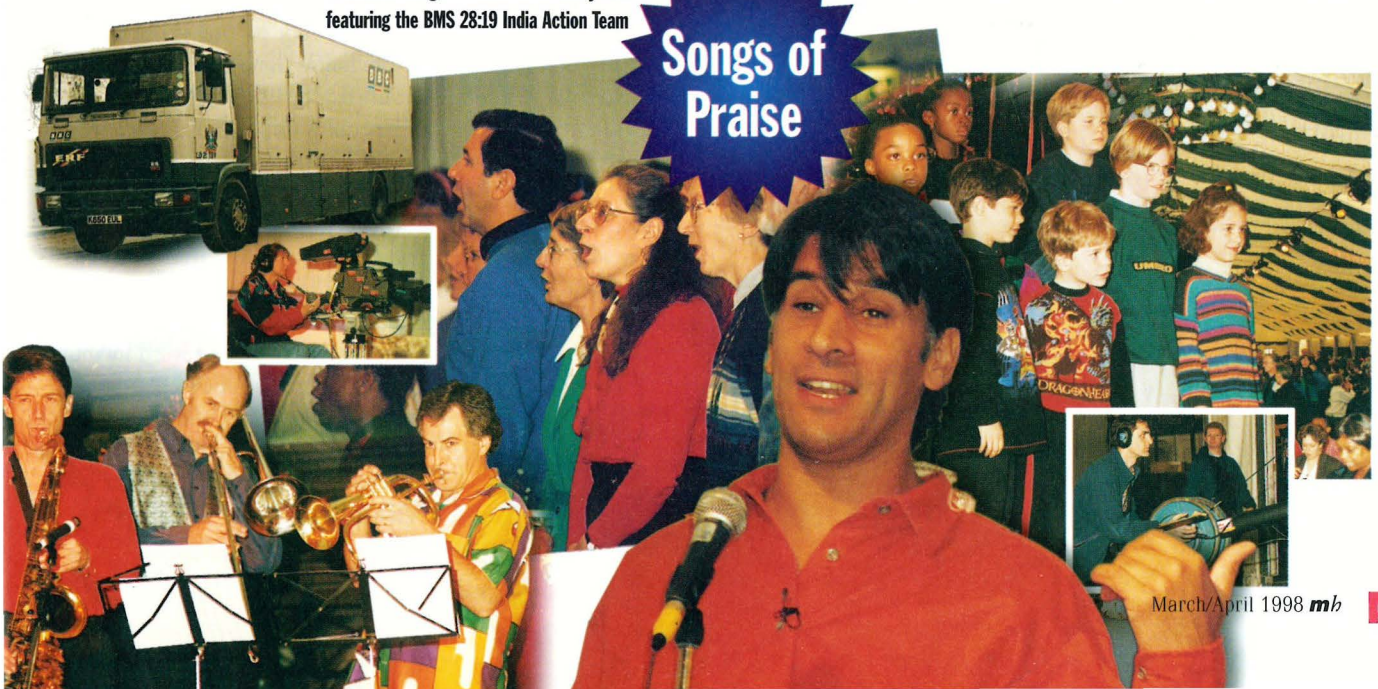
News from Derek Rumbol

Derek Rumbol, formerly BMS Regional Representative for Africa , is now living in Nottinghamshire, and seeing more of his grandchildren. "I'm enjoying not having to get to the office for 8.30 am!" he said, "And it's nice to have a break, because life was quite hectic before. Actually for the first two or three weeks I thought I was on holiday. I knew in my mind that I wasn't going back to work. But then it suddenly hit me. It's very strange being cut off from direct involvement with Africa."

Derek was Regional Rep for Africa for twelve years, retiring last autumn. Before that he and his wife Brenda were BMS missionaries in what was then Zaire (1962-76) and then he was minister of Stantonbury Church, Milton Keynes (1976-85).

Christmas Songs of Praise at Finsbury Park featuring the BMS 28:19 India Action Team

Songs of Praise



BMS News

Focusing the good news on the dark background of favelas

STUART CHRISTINE TELLS OF HIS WORK IN SAO PAULO, BRAZIL

During the night rain came through the roof and rats came through the wooden walls of the two-room shack you live in. Your partner is out of work and out of the house since yesterday evening. God, have you any idea what life can be like in a favela?

It's February and you're expecting your fourth baby in the next few weeks and two year old Andrea is still so small and sickly.

Your seven year old, Ricardo, is due to start primary school next week and he's frightened that the children from the proper houses round about will laugh at him and you can't afford the uniform for him and he's worried about that too.

School has always been a bad word in your life because no-one has done well. You can't read or write and Joao, your new partner's eldest child dropped out when he was twelve. He's never been able to get a regular job and when

he comes back as he did the other day wearing a new pair of Reebok trainers you didn't dare ask where he'd got them.

Starting a new life, starting school, starting a job; they're all such big changes, but when, like twenty five year old Ana Silvia, you've only money for today's food and live in a Sao Paulo favela like Bueru, they can be just too big. It's transition times like these that we are focusing on in developing programmes for the Urban Impact Project here in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

The aim of the Urban Impact Project is to encourage and facilitate the involvement of our churches in effective social-evangelistic mission in these city slum communities that are home to almost one in five of the eighteen million or so inhabitants of this monstrous city.

Programmes focus on crucial times of change and challenge and bring contact with credibility into the local church's life in the community.

Marlene, a retired nursing assistant, heads up this programme that caters for up to 100 new mothers offering pre- and post-natal guidance and nutritional support. One mum with her child in hospital recently knelt in the corridor and called upon the 'God whom she'd discovered at the Clube das Maes,' (mothers' club) to help her. He did!

Under Georgie Christine's direction there are now twelve favela pre-school units bringing introductory school preparation for over 500 five to seven year olds. Georgie has developed a curriculum that works well in favela conditions and is responsible for training the growing number of teachers required as new churches contact us wanting to start a pre-school as part of their favela outreach. The BMS together with Operation Agri have recently undertaken to help fund a full-time Brazilian Pre-schools' Co–ordinator to allow the work to grow further with the aim to have 1000 children in twenty five favela units by the end of 1998.

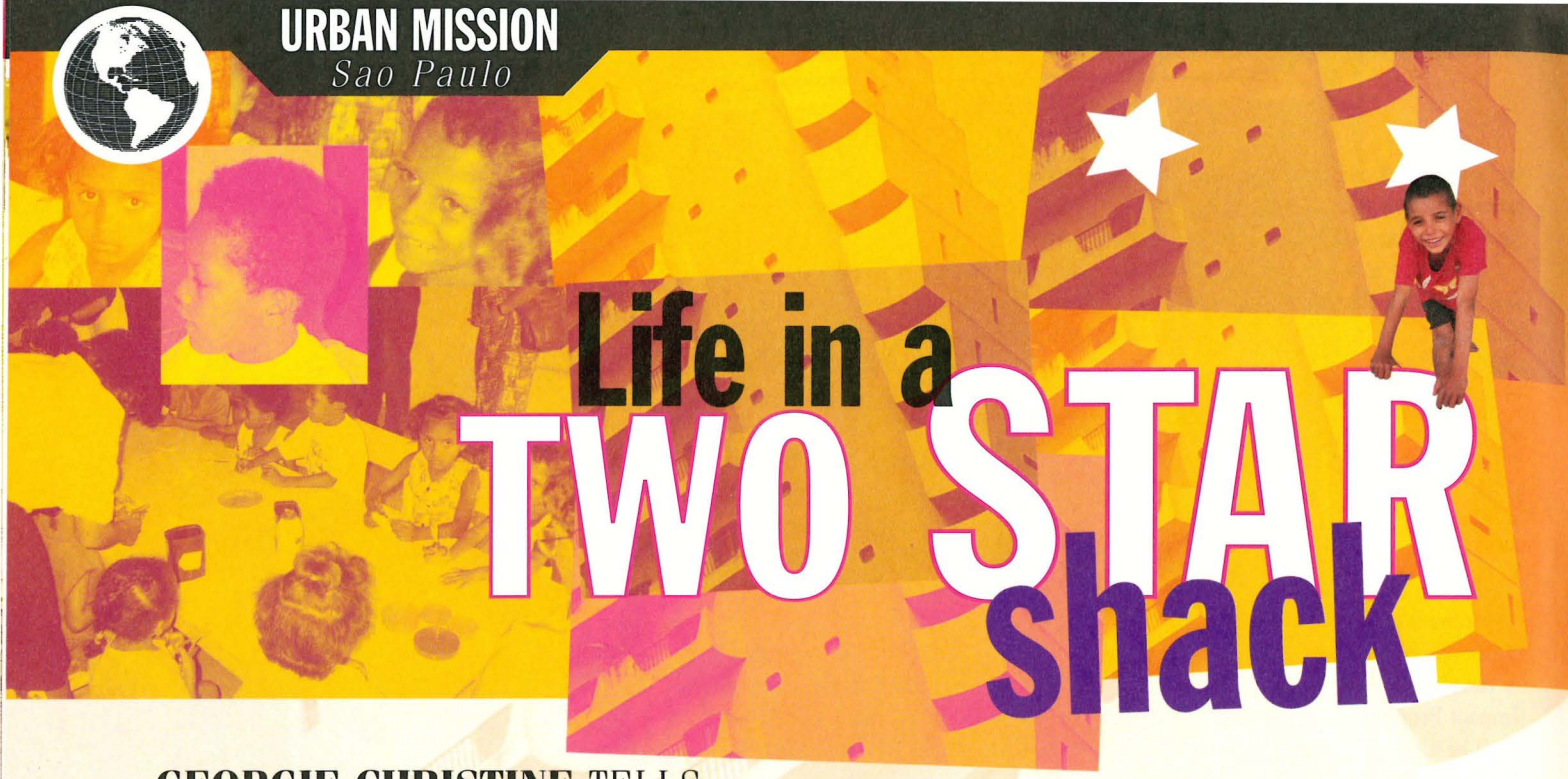
Computing, English language and aerobics classes are three activities typically pursued by Brazilian middle classes that favela young people are normally excluded from. These activities have proved very attractive and confidence building for kids that have been ground down by years of failure and rejection. Specific job training co-operatives that offer income as well as skills in areas like welding, carpentry and bakery are aimed at helping kids break out of the poverty cycle. Partnerships with industry are most helpful here, and a recent link with the Brazilian petroleum company, Petrobras, has enabled us to expand the computer skills training.

Mobilising Christian young people - strategic and necessary!

In conjunction with the ministerial training colleges here and the Oasis Trust we have been working hard to put in place programmes that will catch the imagination and harness the energy and open-mindedness of the youth of our Brazilian churches to make an impact in this whole area of mission amongst the poor. In recent years youth activities have become increasingly church-centred, focusing on worship and recreation for those already 'on board'. There is a great need for attractive and challenging mission programmes that they can get involved in. We also see this as crucial to prepare future leaders with the vision and experience to bring this area of mission into the mainstream of denomina tional life tomorrow. Through the experience they can gain with our mission teams in the favelas of Sao Paulo, possibilities are opening up for Brazilian churches to make a contribution to facing the mission challenge of slum communities in other urban centres around the world. In facilitating the involvement of the dynamic and committed Brazilian Christian young in this way, the BMS will be making yet another significant expression of its ongoing commitment to global mission. ●

"a recent link with the Brazilian petroleum company, Petrobras, has enabled us to expand the computer skills training."

Stuart Christine is a BMS missionary based in Sao Paulo where he is involved in a church planting ministry.



Life in a TWO STAR shack

GEORGIE CHRISTINE TELLS HOW A PRE-SCHOOL PROGRAMME BRINGS HOPE IN THE FAVELAS OF SAO PAULO

Brazil is a beautiful country with rich houses, and varied architecture to the extent that you think you might be in Hollywood visiting some famous film stars. But in the shadow of the luxury there is another and more oppressive reality. Brazil is top of the list of the ten countries in the world that have the greatest difference between rich and poor.

The reality for one in five of the 18 million or so people living in the vast city of Sao Paulo is very different. Living in shanty towns that are called favelas, lives are dominated by poverty, poor housing, lack of medical attention and good schooling.

Favelas come in different shapes and sizes. There are almost 1,000 in Sao Paulo (twice that number in greater Sao Paulo), some of what you might call one star, some three, four, five star. It is true to say that there has been an improvement in the quality of the homes in favelas over the last three years. A lot of the wooden shacks are being replaced by brick built homes, put up at weekends by families and friends. But the growing unemployment in the city, (already over one million are out of work), has meant that the brick-built exteriors often hide poverty just as oppressive as that which used to characterise the life in the wooden shacks.

We visited recently a 'two star' favela: there are boards all around the top of the area - like a walled city. At last we find an entrance and before us is a path that winds down; a slippery and steep path. We get in behind the more reasonable shacks that face the asphalt road and descend to homes that get progressively more precarious.

The smell begins to rise of rubbish and bits of food, or chicken bones and washing is hanging out everywhere. Among all this are the dogs, the hens and the children. The children are everywhere. They often play in the dirt with no shoes. In the bottom of the little valley, two or three hundred shacks are gathered together. The mud and sewage mixes together in what was once a little stream that ran through the bottom of the valley.

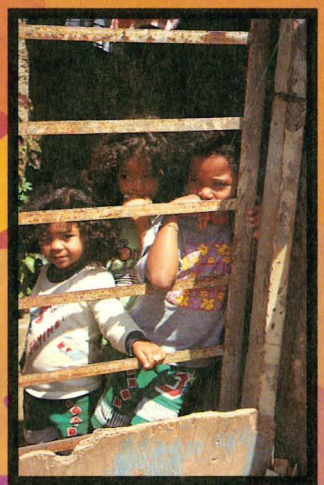
> "...rubbish and bits of food, chicken bones and washing hanging out everywhere."

We bend over to go through the door into Sonia's home. It is made of bits of wood, left over building materials. It's very damp and Sonia, the young woman who has recently begun to come to church, is lying on a simple bed, breathing with difficulty. Her two young daughters are playing around the inside of the house.

Sonia says how she actually managed to get a job to clean a house today, but she is going to be unable to go because of her bronchitis. There will be no money for food once again.

God has seen Sonia imprisoned in her home by ill health and poverty but often God's people don't see and opportunities to express the love of Jesus go un-met. The pre-schools have opened a doorway into over 500 homes now in twelve different favelas.

Cimar, a pre-school teacher, was visiting the homes of some of the children in the favela Vila Andrade. As she went from shack to shack a lady called her over and asked her to come in. She lived right in front of the rubbish dump. She began to plead with Cimar to accept her daughter into the pre-school. The little girl gets up in the morning, puts on her clothes and runs straight to the rubbish dump and plays there all day. There is nothing she can do to get her out of this habit. There is nowhere else for her to go, because her shack is so small there is barely room to stand and sleep. Cimar talked to the little girl and persuaded her



If having read about the work amongst children in the favelas of Sao Paulo, you would personally like to pray for a child there, please contact Department for Constituency Support, BMS, PO Box 49, Didcot, Oxon, OX11 8XA, enclosing a stamped self-addressed envelope.

We will then mail you out a photo of a child known to BMS missionary Georgie Christine along with their personal details.

"...a new world for the children and for the families of the children that attend."

to come and see the pre-school one afternoon. After a couple of days of settling in there was no keeping her away; a new world was opened up for her.

Clavel is a six year old who was not able to go on the school outing that had been arranged. The teacher went to find out why he had not gone, and discovered that it was because he had no shoes, and his father would not let him go without. With a resigned expression on his face, Clavel said it doesn't matter, God stays here with me as well; next year my dad will have given me some shoes.

Sofia is a five year old and her mother had to shave off all her hair recently because she had such a bad infestation of head lice. Sofia was crying and said 'When I grow up I am going to buy lots and lots of medicine against head lice so no one ever needs to be bald again."

At two of our pre-schools we have been able to set up dental surgeries with the help of 15 volunteer dentists. One of them was giving a new pupil, Christina, a six year old a check up when she suddenly paused and looked up at Georgie in a critical way making the comment that this child has never brushed her teeth. I suggested that she asked the girl if she had ever had a tooth brush. Christina's answer was no, but she knew that she was going to get one in the pre-school.

Josianna is a seven year old who often comes to the school crying and irritable. That is because she has had nothing to eat since the day before. At home her father and mother are under the influence of drugs again. The little money there was has been spent on drugs and food has been forgotten. She is hungry and she just wants to sit on your knee and have a cuddle.

The teachers at our schools could tell stories like these all day long, but they are also able to tell the happier stories of just how effective these little schools of forty to fifty children, often running in converted shacks, are in opening a new world for the children and for the families of the children that attend.

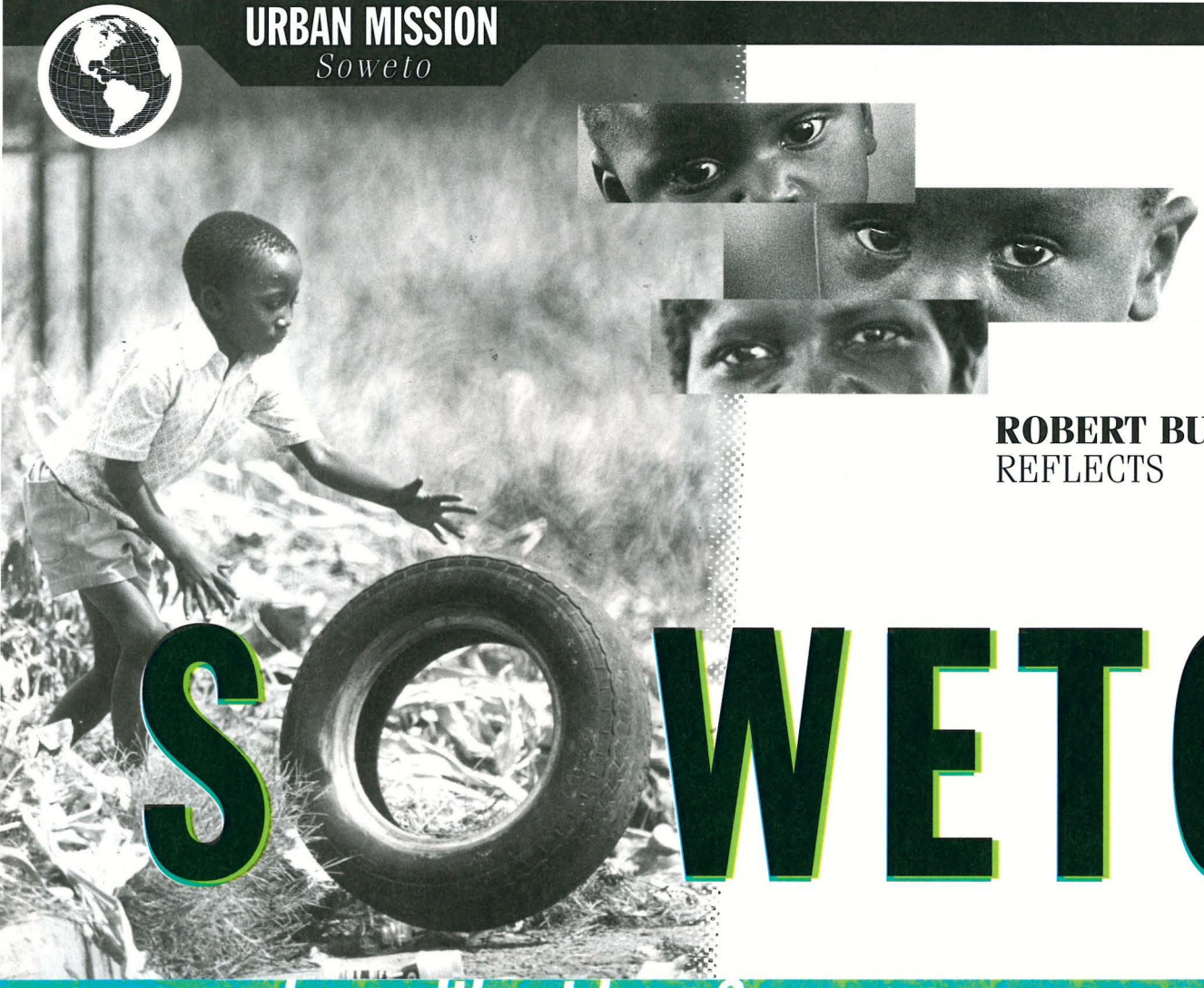
One teacher writes: "In only three months of work we are able to see positive results. Especially in the way the children get on with one another. In the beginning the children were very aggressive, as time has passed however, there has been a terrific change in the way they have behaved together, they no longer cling to the teacher and they play and help one another. They have especially enjoyed the recently introduced recorder classes.

The pre–school work continues to grow. Our aim is to have 1,000 children in 25 of these schools, spread throughout the favelas in Sao Paulo by the end of 1998.

Thanks to a grant from Operation Agri we are hoping to be able to employ a full time co-ordinator for the Pre-school Programme. This should allow the schools network to expand even beyond Sao Paulo to other cities.

All this goes on day by day and hand in hand with evangelistic work to begin at churches and provide communities of God's people in each of these communities of poverty. ●

Georgie Christine is a BMS missionary working in Sao Paulo, Brazil.



ROBERT BURR
REFLECTS

SOWETO

a place without hope?

I love Soweto. It's a bumper sticker and you will see it quite often on vehicles driving in and out of the most famous township in the world. It could also double up as a pertinent reminder to the Church of its 'Great Commission' to the **SO**uth **WE**stern **TO**wnship where an estimated four million people live. To understand the problems of evangelism in Soweto you have to take an African view, almost to get beneath the skin of your African brother, and see it through his eyes - only then do you appreciate the miracle of his salvation and begin to realise why some of his neighbours might not whole heartedly embrace the gospel...

It's a white man's religion some will say, even to the extent of arguing - wrongly of course - that Jesus was white, but then it is hardly surprising... In the same way that a Jew will reject your evangelism because his history has seen many persecutions perpetrated in the name of Christ, your South African black friend, having been the victim of erroneous biblical teaching which condemned him to a life of separation and servanthood and labelled a 'kaffir' (Arabic word for infidel) by the Afrikaner, may throw the Christian message straight back at you. This line comes from those are still bitter.

"Only long term commitment with sound and wisely ministered biblical teaching will result in genuine conversion..."

Conversely, there is an amazing degree of forgiveness in this country - from the humblest shack to the President himself, a pool of tolerance in the people which soaked up suffering and injustice and even in a 'New South Africa' carries on a sort of subservient respect, perhaps more prevalent in the thirty plus age group, but reinforced in many cases by a culture which does show respect when a modern world so readily discards such values. Coupled with the historical position that the white was always seen as the provider, you can find yourself in ministry at a soup kitchen where the assembled 'congregation' will maintain an unspoken attitude: 'we are pleased to see you, glad of your interest and are willing to please' - so willing, the sinners prayer can be recited in eager

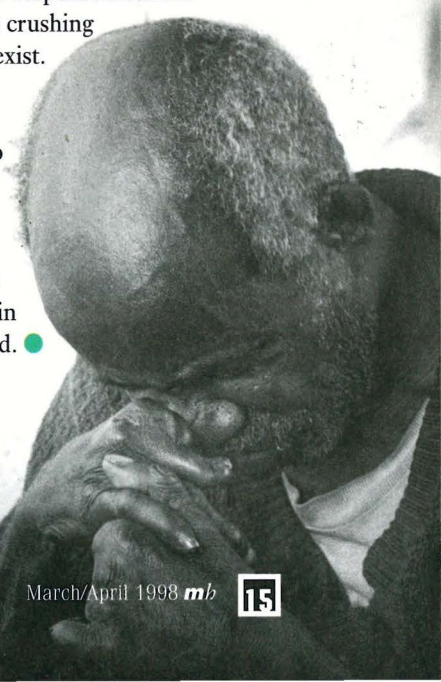
anticipation that something of more immediate physical value will be rendered; so two hundred meals ladled, two hundred souls added - or were they? Only long term commitment with sound and wisely ministered biblical teaching will result in genuine conversion with roots in God's word, but beyond the day a shack dweller gives his life to Christ there is another problem…

Significance, security and self worth... The lack of these is forcing many young Sowetans to resort to the assault rifle in pursuit of that coveted BMW car or to go on risky day or night excursions into the wealthier suburbs of Johannesburg to bring back electrical goods from what has become the crime capital of the world. On a less violent note, these same feelings of hopelessness still affect the Christian and perhaps the biggest reason for backsliding amongst young Christians in Soweto's largest church is the hopelessness of an uncertain future with no job. Throw this into the equation and you will understand why the two million membership of a part-Christian, part-ancestral worship sect-cum-church has been so successful with its emphasis on encouraging involvement in full or part-time business ventures for its one hundred per cent African membership. However, it has a dark side for any who wish to renounce its membership and become born again, quite a few have become mentally ill in the process.

"Johannesburg… has become the crime capital of the world."

Any improvement since the new Government? Yes, in the townships, in housing and infrastructure. The road signs are slowly going back up, but there needs to be a greater response from the Church towards the crushing hardships that still exist. Almost in the same spirit of Acts 2:44 there really needs to be restitution that creates empowerment; otherwise the Good News may be good in word but not in deed. ●

Robert Burr runs a ministry training young South Africans in fine furniture making.



Down & Out

on the streets of France

PIERRE AND MARIE THEBAULT WORK WITH HOMELESS PEOPLE IN TOULOUSE. **ROBERT ATKINS** QUESTIONED THEM ABOUT THEMSELVES AND THEIR ACTIVITIES

Robert Atkins: Is there anything in your background to explain why you work with street people?

Pierre Thebault: I lived on the fringes of society from the age of fifteen. I became an alcoholic, helped found the famous punk group Berurier Noir, lived on the streets and spent time in prison. I think I understand the rebellion and emptiness in the lives of the people who come to the Chapelle.

Marie Thebault: I had a difficult adolescence: drugs, alcohol, depression. I even planned a career in social work when I observed the people who tried to help me but I was in deep trouble myself. I spent some time sleeping rough. That's where I met Pierre.

Robert Atkins: How did you find yourselves working at the Chapelle?

Marie Thebault: Pierre was converted in a Catholic community and God heard me when I cried 'out of the depths.'

When we began to go to church we thought the doors should be open for people like ourselves. We were eager to help. We found a church in a strange place - in a shopping centre where the doors were already open. There was a strange pastor who was prepared for it to happen. The church was the Chapelle and the pastor was you!

> **"I became an alcoholic, helped found the famous punk group Berurier Noir, lived on the streets and spent time in prison."**

Pierre Thebault: The first guys who came in terrified me in spite of my background - perhaps because of it. I thought they'd drag me down. I'd never bothered with people as rough as these but they're our friends now. Some of them are downstairs as we speak.

Robert Atkins: We provide breakfast three days a week for about fifteen people but that's not all, is it?

Pierre Thebault: No. We aim to listen and to show them a respect they rarely receive outside.

Robert Atkins: What sort of people come?

Marie Thebault: It's hard to generalise but I think of Fabrice

and Annie who are what we call enfant de la DDASS - people from broken homes. They've never known much else. On the other hand, there's André who's had a house, a car, a job and a family but who now sleeps on the steps of the Chapelle and begs in the street. He lost everything when his marriage broke up. Humanly speaking, none of them has much of a future but then again, neither did we!

Robert Atkins: Do drugs play a part in their lives?

Pierre Thebault: Practically all of them are either heavy users of alcohol or on drugs but whether these are a cause or an effect of their predicament is a hard question.

Robert Atkins: What sort of encouragements have there been? Is it simplistic to ask whether there have been spiritual encouragements?

Marie Thebault: Not at all. We have had some of our friends from the street at Bible studies and at a recent baptismal service. We do a daily Bible reading and prayer mid-morning and some of them have come to that. But it's important to remember that many already have an interest in spiritual things. Speedy always has the Bible in his guitar case. Mick carries one in his rucksack. The Bible in cartoons is always popular. There are often questions but you must be prepared to wait. One of our best friends, Jacques, waited months before he dared set foot in the Chapelle. He needed to be sure we'd respect him and not see him as a captive audience for the gospel.

"In the medium term we'd like to be able to have a better equipped centre with a shower."

Pierre Thebault: Jacques has been a big encouragement. He's helped us put in a sink for the work we do and is helping us put up some polystyrene tiles - building is his background. There's a fierce loyalty towards the Chapelle, too. This is their place and they won't hear a word said against it.

Robert Atkins: What about your hopes and fears for the future?

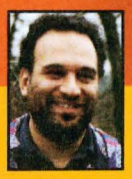
Pierre Thebault: There is sometimes violence but for people with our background the violence we meet all too often finds an echo within us. That frightens me.

Marie Thebault: Our hopes? Short-term we want to have a fund to help people with the deposit for a flat - this is the first obstacle for someone who wants to find a way out. We've already been able to help a couple of people to find something. In the medium term we'd like to be able to have a better equipped centre with a shower. Long-term we'd like the town council to let us administer some flats so that we could always help someone really motivated to escape from the street.

Robert Atkins: Are these things possible?

Marie Thebault: I think so. What's more, God is always capable of surprising us!

Robert Atkins is a BMS missionary involved in church work in Toulouse, France.



Mike Pilavachi

Reclaiming our cities for Christ

We have been holding our Soul Survivor youth festival in rural Somerset for five years now. In the summer of 1997 over 10,000 young people came from all over the UK and places as far away as South Africa, California and Australia. There were many wonderful moments. We touched his glory as we worshipped, sensed his power as we prayed and were made aware of his love as we took communion.

Yet at the end I felt strangely dissatisfied. It took me a while to work out the nature of my ambivalence. We were having a great time on an agricultural showground in Somerset, and the only invitations we could issue were to the sheep and cows.

In the summer of the year 2000 we are holding Soul Survivor in the city of Manchester. We are joining with many churches and groups who serve in inner city Manchester in order to proclaim Jesus where masses of young people are. We are hoping that 20,000 young people will join us in this mission.

As we begin the preparations for this it is dawning on me that it would have been much easier to have stayed in Somerset - rolling hills, the Cheddar Gorge, jet ski-ing...

Instead we will have the Manchester metro-link, Moss Side and possible danger. Who would want to go to inner city Manchester when they could be in tranquil Somerset? - Only those who have a passion to communicate the gospel of Jesus to a generation who have never heard of him.

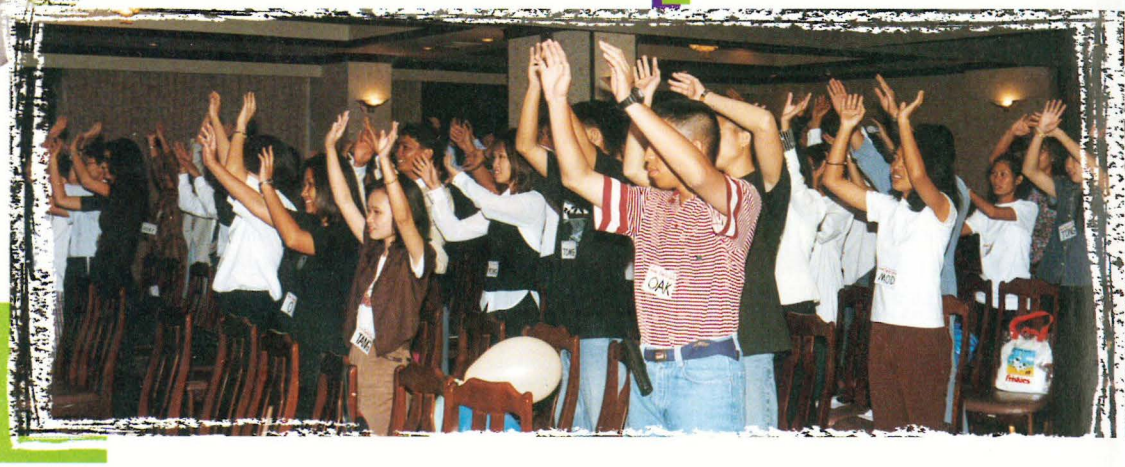
We know this is only a small start when others have been doing this for years, but at least it is a start. Our world is rapidly becoming an urban jungle. Most people now live in cities and yet in our own nation the inner cities have the lowest proportion of Christians.

Of course there must be mission to the country and to suburbia; however the great challenge is to reclaim our cities for Christ. There are many ways of facing up to the challenge of urban mission and we each need to be listening to the Spirit for our own direction.

Mike Pilavachi heads up the Soul Survivor team and pastors a congregation in Watford specially aimed at reaching young people.

Mike Dwight with Sanewian Duangkham pastor of Siam Bangkok church

Church plantin



GEOFF BLAND SPOKE TO MIKE DWIGHT ABOUT HIS CHURCH PLANTING MINISTRY

Bangkok, the capital of Thailand, is a huge city of around ten million people. Throughout the city there are around 130 Christian churches - a tiny number amongst such a vast population. But a large proportion of these 130 churches have been planted in the last ten years.

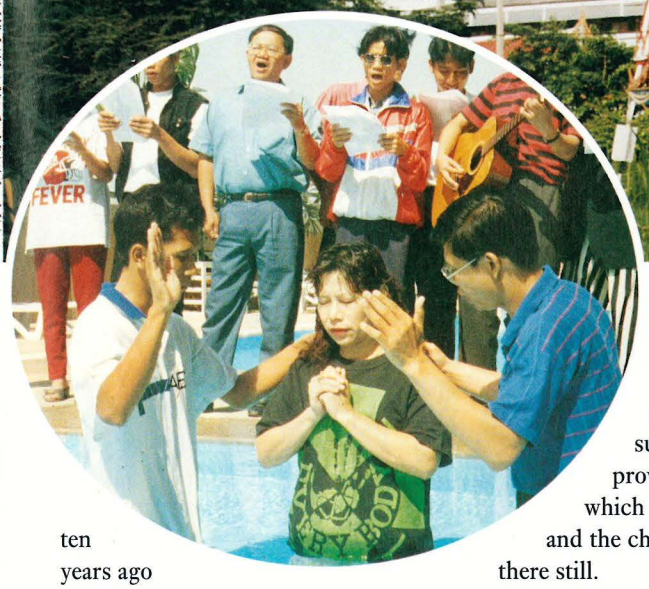
Many different missions have recognized the challenge of church-planting in Bangkok and responded positively. One of these church-planters is Mike Dwight, a British missionary who has been working in Thailand for over 20 years with Worldwide Evangelisation Crusade (WEC).

Until five years ago Mike lived and worked in the rural provinces of Sukhothai and Kamphaengphet. The response to the gospel in Thailand has always been limited and most missions in early days tended to go where the response was. Often this was amongst country people with special needs (eg leprosy) who were impressed by the love that Christians showed for them. "This has been good," says Mike, "but we may have missed out on some strategic places to start churches." So in recent years there has been a new emphasis on urban mission, and Mike sees Bangkok as a key strategic point for church-planting.

It is never easy to define urban mission, and that is certainly true in a city like Bangkok with a vast cross-section of people. There are the powerful government and military officials, the highly educated professionals, an emerging middle-class, a huge number of students, many lower-class workers, and hordes of migrant workers who come from the countryside. In Bangkok they may well live in poor housing similar to their simple country homes. "But," says Mike, "their outlook is often very different. People come hoping for a change in their standard of living. In particular there is a great exodus of young people from the villages. They want something new. They don't want to be rice farmers like their fathers before them. So they come to colleges and factories, willing to do whatever it takes to improve their lives."

"Inevitably this means that they get caught up in materialism and a secular way of living. In the countryside, the local temple has a dominant place in everyday life. But when people come to Bangkok that pillar of society is moved aside and replaced by the quest for material things - clothes, car, mobile phone, house etc. Once this gets into the system it's a very tough nut to crack, just like in the West. The Buddhists feel the effects of it. The temples in Bangkok have to be staffed by monks from rural areas, because materialistic Thais in Bangkok don't want to go into temple service. If you looked at any bookstall

g in Bangkok



ten years ago you would have seen a mass of Buddhist religious material. You'll still find a few religious books, about certain popular monks or magic amulets, but in the main such books have been replaced by titles like "How to make your first million'."

The current economic crisis has exposed the emptiness of this philosophy, but even so, as in the West, it's very hard to interest materialists with spiritual truth. Nevertheless Mike sees a great opportunity to reach people who have moved to the city from the countryside. "There is a void there. They don't have a temple. They don't have religious connections. They are looking for something new and often they don't have any friends. So there is great potential for friendship evangelism."

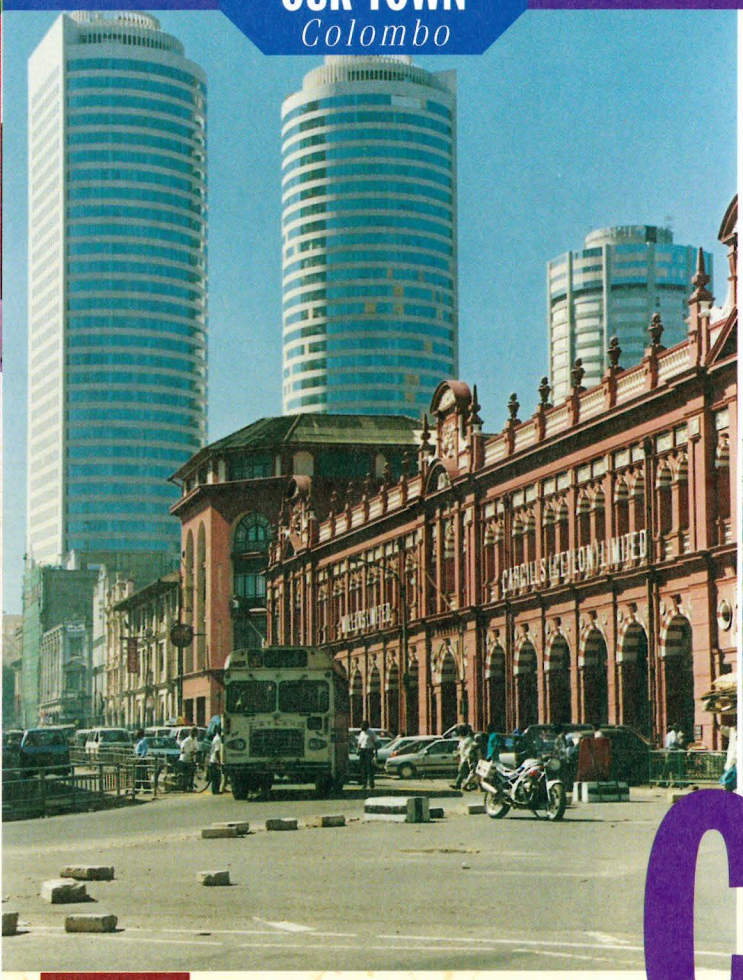
This friendship evangelism is the main activity of the Siam Bangkok Church which was founded by Mike five years ago. The church began as a small cell-group meeting in a hotel. At that time Mike met "by divine appointment" a young Thai man, Sangwian, who was leading a small cell-group in his home. By joining forces the new church gained a Thai pastor to head the work, with an experienced missionary to support him. The hotel provided a neutral venue which people could enter freely, and the church continues to meet there still.

Over the five years, more than 120 people have come to the Lord. These have been mainly students or young professionals. "We didn't set out to target students though we did aim to reach the middle class rather than the urban poor," says Mike, "because the middle class can move up or down. Most of our contacts were of this type in the 18 to 30 age range, because Sangwian himself had come through Ramkham-haeng University and knew people of that age. Our church only has a couple of members who are older than 30 - I'm the venerable grandfather!"

Growing churches in Bangkok has proved to be more difficult than planting them, because Bangkok people are more educated and have a broader world view. But, says Mike, "It's much harder because it's so difficult to bring people together and to 'build church'. So friendship and the use of the home are vital."

That's why the cell structure is the key to the Bangkok Siam Church's evangelistic policy - the heart of the church's life rather than the Sunday service. Each Sunday morning there are Bible study groups before the morning service. After lunch together, the members meet in various cell groups for practical training in such things as leading worship and witness. During the week there are cell groups whose purpose is evangelistic with the Christians bringing friends along to chat, share testimony and the gospel, and to pray for the needs of each other including those who are not yet Christians. Starting with four to five people the aim is that over a nine month period the group will grow to around 15 and then divide, having during that time trained up new leaders in one of the Sunday training cell groups. "That's the theory," says Mike. "We're still working it through and we're not there yet. What with Bangkok's horrific traffic, people working late, others moving away, it's a little bit chaotic. But I believe in my heart that it's something that can work in the urban, Bangkok setting." ●

Geoff Bland was formerly pastor of Frimley Baptist Church in Surrey. He has been working in Thailand with BMS since 1990, and for the past four years has been teaching New Testament at Bangkok Institute of Theology.



A SERIES EDITED BY **JAN KENDALL** THAT LOOKS AT TOWNS AND CITIES AROUND THE WORLD WHERE BMS PERSONNEL ARE WORKING

BY JOSEPHINE PUGH, SARAH ANNE PARKER, DAVID & SUE JACKSON, MARGARET & PETER GOODALL, DAVID & JANET KERRIGAN

Colombo

Our Town

Introduction

The city has, over the centuries, seen first, Arab traders, then Portuguese and Dutch settlers. But it's the British colonial period which has left the most enduring mark and which you'd notice most easily. Some of the old street names, the architecture of course, the preponderence of English spoken....these are the clues, but now all this is changing. 1998 is Sri Lanka's 50th year since Independence and Colombo is ready for a new day! New tower blocks are as common (and as anonymous) as those in any modern city; street names and billboards are now in Sinhalese and Tamil as well as English, the numbers of cars are growing at a huge rate, straining the infrastructure to the limit, and new companies are holding their own international markets. Even 'Kentucky Fried Chicken' has come to town!

History

A wide variety of colonial powers all had their influence on Colombo's development; the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British who made the area famous for its tea plantations. The island gained its independence in 1948.

The capital of Sri Lanka has witnessed some of the worst of the violence in the country's civil war, including the assassination of President Premadasa in 1993 by a suicide bomber and major terrorist bomb attacks in 1996. The war has been going on since 1983, and over 50,000 people have been killed, and 1.5 million displaced. A military end to the conflict between the majority Sinhalese and the minority Tamils may be in sight, but the country is still very unstable.

First Impressions by David and Sue Jackson

On arrival in the country, the first thing that struck us was the traffic and the fact that there are so many people everywhere! Driving on the roads is rather like driving on a city-wide dodgem track - but, of course, the object of the exercise is to miss, and not to hit! The other 'traffic' is a mixture of dilapidated cars (that wouldn't go near an MOT test), sparkling limousines, vans full to overflowing, lorries in various states of repair, ancient buses "belching black smoke and driven by lunatics" that have people hanging precariously from all angles at the doors and on the steps (and packed like sardines inside), motorised trishaws, bicycles, motorbikes (all

Creative Driving in Colombo's morning rush hour.

Far left : Architecture old and new, York Street, Colombo. Cargills Ceylon Ltd is in the foreground, and the World Trade Centre twin towers in the background.

Left : Colombo lottery ticket seller

Below left : Cinnamon Gardens Baptist Church, Colombo - at one of the city's busiest junctions

Below: Colombo Town Hall - based on the White House!

weaving in and out of the mayhem), bullock carts, pedestrians in the middle of the road with no apparent thought for life or limb and, of course, a selection of cows and other animals. Beginning to drive was really quite frightening for us both, but gradually we have got used to the hustle and bustle and the noise all around as everyone seems to be in competition as to who can sound his horn the loudest and longest.

A Walk Around the Town

Not as glitzy as Hong Kong, not as scenic as Rio, and nowhere near as romantic as Paris, but Colombo has a dash of just about everything!

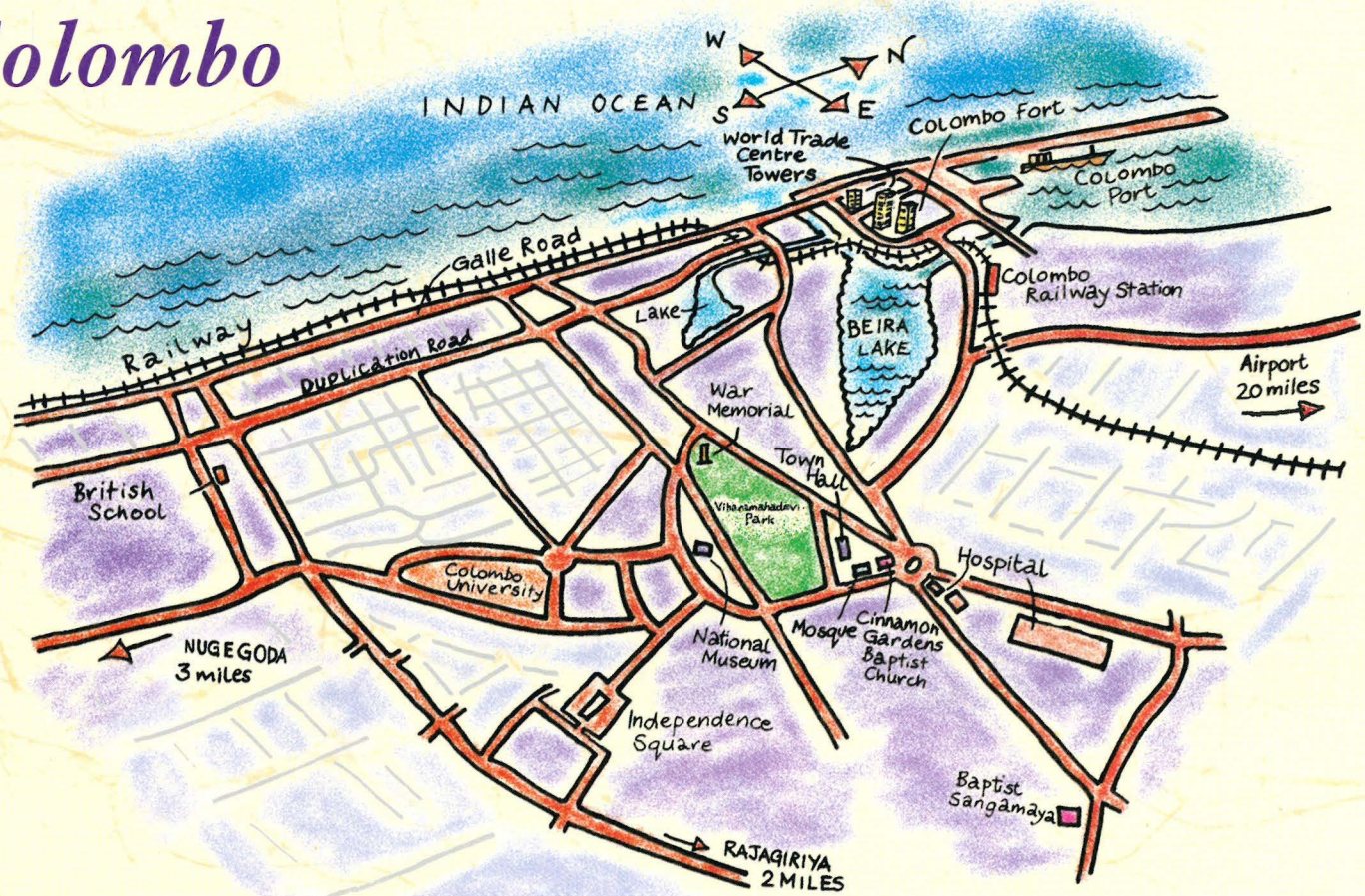
It has a million people to start with, and although you wouldn't meet all of them, you'd feel you had! The old city is very crowded. You'd also look out to the Indian Ocean and see twenty or thirty huge container ships waiting to berth - this is one of the best and the busiest ports in Asia. You'd see the twin towers of the World Trade Centre, how they exude confidence in the country's ability to be prosperous, though the boarded, bomb-damaged windows bear testimony to the war that haunts this island nation.

Elsewhere there are narrow alleyways packed with traders selling their wares; the noise, the colours and the apparent disorder contrasting with one or two recently opened malls which may offer convenience and air-conditioning but never the character or the prices of the alleyways!

Be prepared for the odd surprise too – a single 1940s red double decker still plies its route, alongside the ubiquitous trishaws, the Toyota vans, and even a Rolls Royce – yes, one has been seen!

Cinnamon Gardens Baptist Church is at the heart of one of the busiest junctions in town. A couple of hundred yards away stands the impressive Town Hall glistening white against the sky. Behind that is the Viharamahadevi Park. The park is like a lung in the middle of the city. Opposite the church, is the National Hospital which is one of the biggest in this part of Asia, and next to that is the Eye Hospital. Buses from all over the city and the more distant places roar by until they come to a crawl in the dense traffic build-up. Street vendors ply their goods to the passing crowds. The immediate neighbour to the church is a mosque whose Immam calls the faithful to prayer beginning at 4.45 am. The last call is about 8.00 pm.The mosque

Colombo



lombo World Trade Centre - the foreground is the Galadari Hotel, scene of the last major bomb in October 1997. Boarded windows bear stimony to the damage

amplifier is more powerful than it's neighbour's. We are in a cacophany of sound. Prostitution and drug trafficking have long been part of the scene.

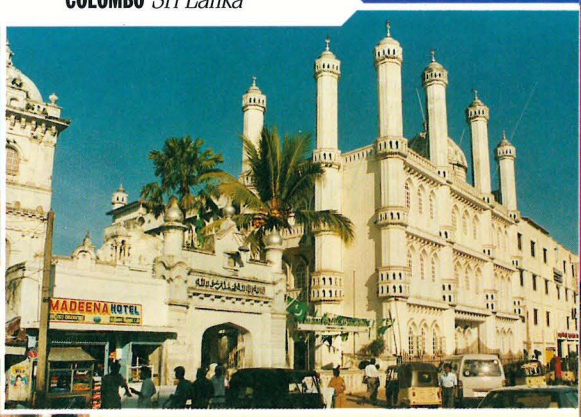
Culture

Colombo is culturally mixed. Official signs are in three languages: Sinhala, Tamil and English, and, as well as the two main races (Sinhalese and Tamils), there are descendants of the Arabs, Portuguese, Dutch and British. It is a tragedy that ethnic suspicions and jealousies are blighting a society which this year celebrates 50 years of independence from colonial rule, and which could, in theory, be a showcase of inter-racial tolerance.

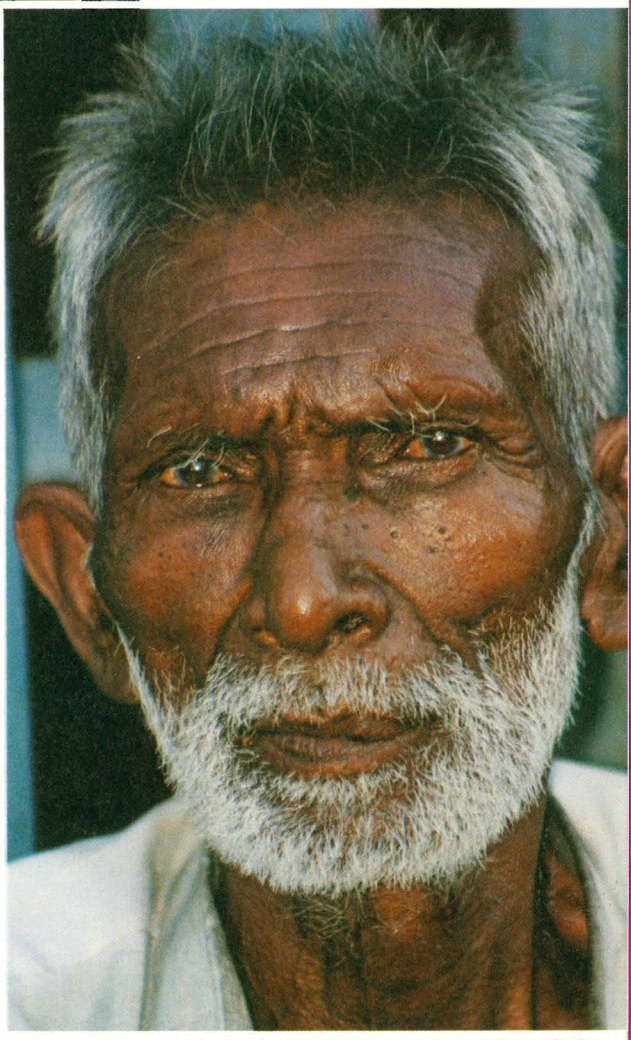
Religious Life

If it's religion you want – the world is before you! There's plenty of churches (Catholic, Methodist and Dutch Reformed as well as Baptist), hundreds of Buddhist temples, and a few mosques. With Buddhism as the major state religion, the numbers of Christians

Colombo's sole remaining London bus



Colombo City Mosque – attached at the far en is the Community Centre building of Cinnamon Gardens Baptist Church



declined in previous centuries but over the last ten years, despite some discrimination against Christians, and Christianity's portrayal as a foreign, colonial religion, church numbers are rising again.

The cultural mix is obvious in religion also. Buddhist shrines are found in almost every street, but there are also Hindu temples, Muslim mosques and Christian churches.

Most of the country's population are Buddhist, with only 7.5 per cent of people Christians. Only one per cent of the population are evangelical Christians.

Church Life

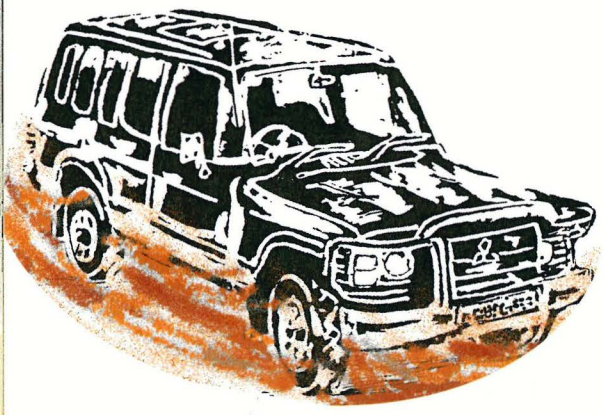
The churches in Columbo are very 'English' in everything from the buildings and pews, to the structure of the services and the hymns used. This is very different from churches in villages which are far smaller and have fewer people fluent in English.

People coming from other parts of the world where worship is exuberant, even flamboyant, can have difficulty adapting to the style of worship in the Baptist churches. In everyday life, perhaps as part of the Buddhist way, many Sri Lankans seem to hide their emotions and feelings.

Outreach

The fellowship at Cinnamon Gardens has been engaged in the challenge of trying to practice what is preached through the ongoing ministry of God's Word. Some years ago a community project building was put up for the purpose of serving the area around the church. This is the Dev Piya Sevena building which is right next to the mosque. At present there is a sewing class, a basic computer skills course and a street children's education programme. Beyond this ongoing work, the Board envisages a food outlet, a handyman's course in house repairs, accommodation for people visiting the hospitals and a hostel for working girls whose work is nearby. All this will be costly to run, so the rest of the building will have offices on rent. At present a bank and an insurance company are using part of the building. ●

The Democratic Republic of CONGO



Though the clock said only 185 miles, you can take it from me that it was a very long way. Two days by Land Rover. Destination? Mampu, an EEC agro-forestry project. Stay there and visit the church at Kinzono and a new group at Nsuni. Team? Evangelist Mputu, Belesi, Izabelle and Sylvie to work with the Kinzono women, and ourselves.

Complication? The little matter of the bridges over the Mai-Ndombe and Lufimi rivers being blown up. So, along with commercial lorries and the odd four-wheel drive, we'd have to take the dirt road leading to a ferry across the Mai-Ndombe. Below their conflux, this would take us beyond both rivers.Then plough on from there.

In fact, a tractor might not have been a bad idea! Heavy rains had filled all the holes in the road, and driving conditions were atrocious. Water, water everywhere, and mud, mud, glorious mud!

Lorries digging themselves out on hills or broken down in the narrow road enforced frequent detours through the bush and scrub. At last, with a fine view of the Congo river to the left, we wormed our way down the winding, sandy hill past numerous stuck vehicles, whose sweaty, digging crews shouted that we'd never make it, to a village by the water's edge. Thirty miles in five hours!

At 5 o'clock rain had stopped the ferry. Two rooms in a grass-roofed, mud hut, each with just enough room to enter and put a bag beside the crude bed, allowed four of us to at least stretch out. Neither sleep nor privacy were enhanced by the blaring radio, loud chatter, a quarrel and heavy snoring. Mputu and Belesi, on a cold, moonlight-bright night, curled up in the vehicle, and fended off the mosquitoes till dawn.

First on the ferry, we paid the fee and gave five litres of fuel. Across by 8 o'clock, we were soon up the road and stuck in sand. A Toyota heading for Tshikapa gave a hand. Lost them somewhere in the grass and scrub around 10 o'clock. On the road again we pressed on, stopping in a forest, at midday for a picnic.

About to set off again, lo and behold, the Toyota. We followed at our own pace. Out in the open, overlooking a broad valley, they were glimpsed descending to the forest where, no doubt, a stream ran. Sure enough, they climbed out as we reached the sandy ford, having tested its depth first. Up the other side, a mile along the ridge, we caught them again, at a fork in the road. Scratching their heads. No signpost and no-one around. Which way to go? No good asking us - we're new here too.

The right fork disappeared down towards the river again. Tracks could be seen climbing the hill the other side. The left fork was nondescript. The Toyota opted to go left, and the majority said, "Follow them!" Unfortunately we did.

Miles further on, a man said we were on the right road. He must have misunderstood. Only when we had climbed to the top of a ridge and had a clear view of the road descending a gentle valley and stretching straight ahead, eastwards, as far as the eye could see, were we sure that this wasn't it. A traveller on foot soon confirmed our

Deanna Clark on the road to Mampu

Nsuni village - evangelistic campaign

A very long way

Was it worth it? Only at the end of the next eight days would it be possible to say unequivocally, "Yes!"

Evangelist Mputu and team, Nsuni village evangelistic campaign - the repentant kneel for prayer

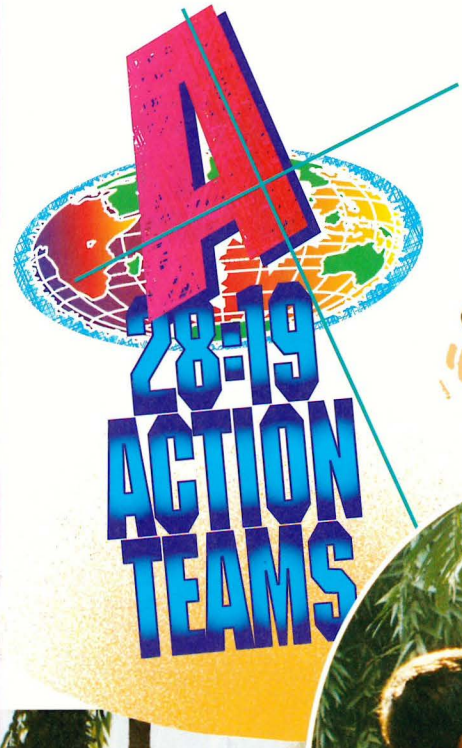
diagnosis. Too late! Keep going, he said, and when you hit the Kikwit-Bandundu road turn right. Thus were 50 unnecessary miles added to the journey.

We reached Mampu after dark, about half-past six, battered by ten hours of travel, shattered and either travel-sick or sick of travel. Find the watchman, open the house, unload our stuff, scramble some supper and flop into bed. Was it worth it? Only at the end of the next eight days would it be possible to say unequivocally, "Yes!"

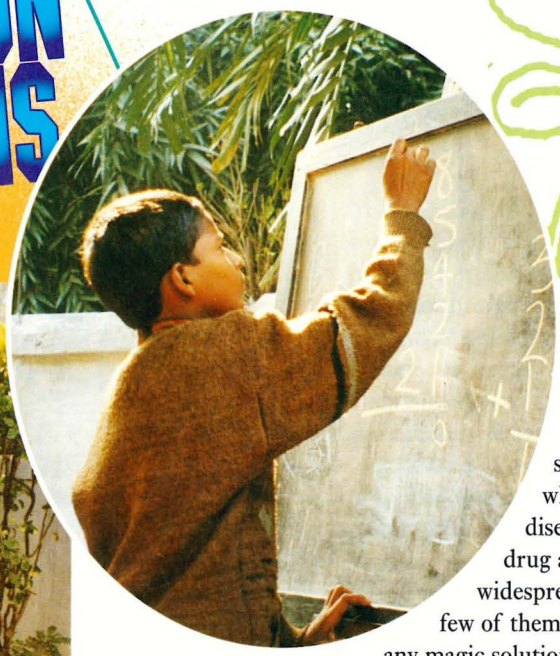
A service of thanksgiving for safekeeping during the recent troubles was held at Kinzono on the Sunday, followed by a three-day evangelistic campaign in the late afternoons. Commitments to Christ were made or renewed. On Thursday we left Izabelle and Sylvie to meet the Kinzono women, but only two turned up. Others were collecting caterpillars, it being the season for this item of diet. Survival comes first!

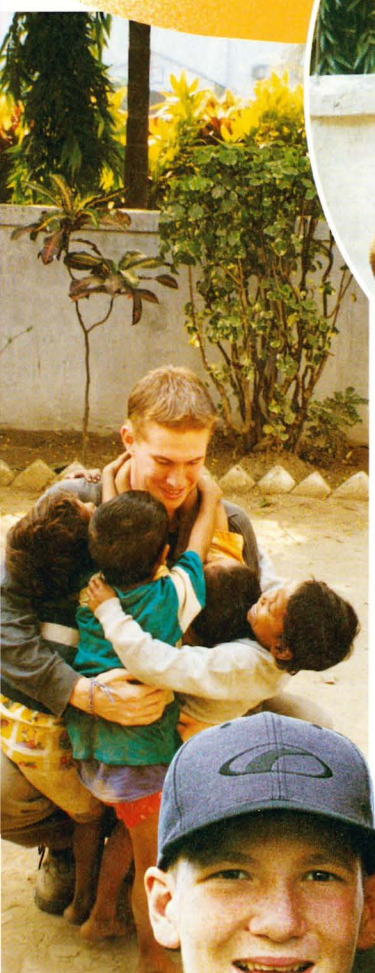
Another three-day campaign at Nsuni, where a group of Christians, from the village and from a nearby farm, but with no specific affiliation, had asked for help, again produced a good response. During conversations we agreed with them how to organise their fellowship and activities, and what programme to follow. For days we had been praying that it wouldn't rain, while the local farmers had been praying that it would. As it happened we won, and the road had largely dried out. Leaving at 7 o'clock on Monday, on the right road, we were at the ferry by midday and, now covered with a film of dust, would you believe, at the main, tarmac road by 4 o'clock. From there plain sailing all the way home.

Certainly the journey back had been a lot shorter, but the enduring impression left by that trip is that, if you want to get to Mampu by that road, it's a very long way. ●



a mustard seed



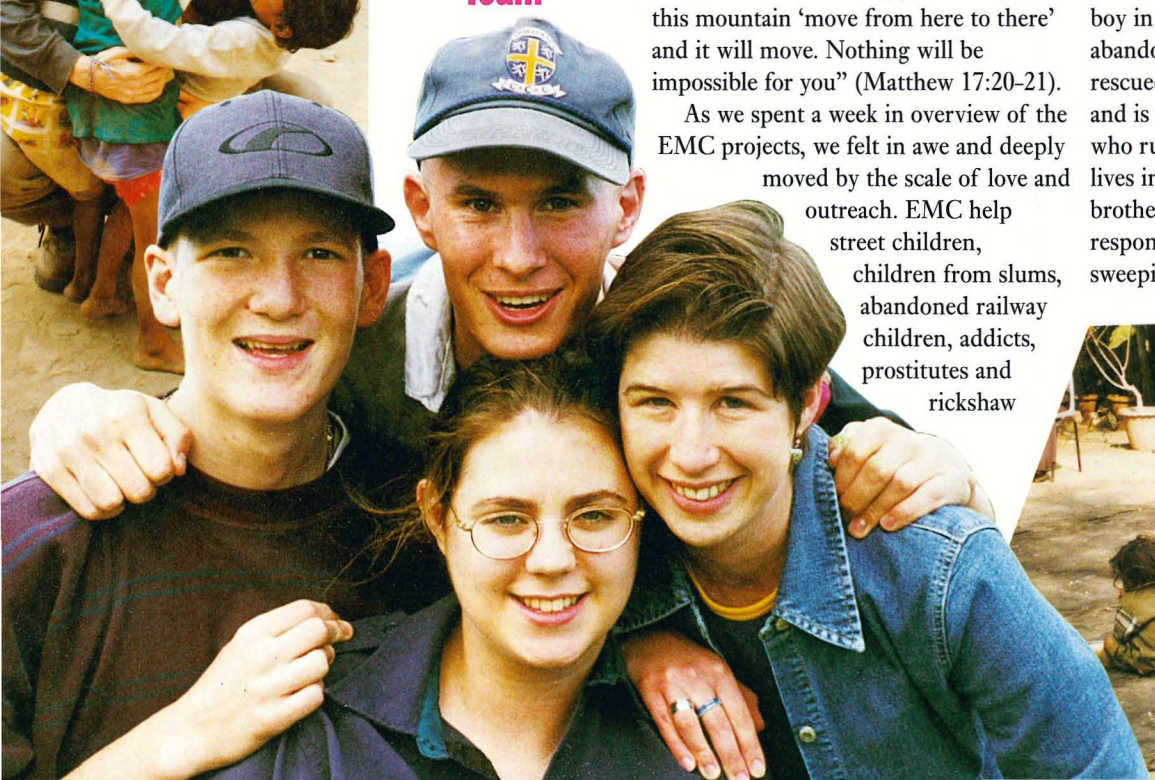


1997/1998 India Action Team

The problems of life in Calcutta can totally overwhelm you - child labour, unbelievable poverty, living and dying on the streets, slum conditions which breed fatal diseases, an epidemic of drug addiction and widespread prostitution are a few of them. Can you imagine any magic solution to bring hope and justice to the millions who are enslaved to this way of life? Emmanuel Ministries Calcutta (EMC) are by no means magicians but their work epitomises Jesus' teaching: "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain 'move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you" (Matthew 17:20-21).

As we spent a week in overview of the EMC projects, we felt in awe and deeply moved by the scale of love and outreach. EMC help street children, children from slums, abandoned railway children, addicts, prostitutes and rickshaw pullers. Organisation is rather manic and "Indian", but the priority which shines through is the time they lay aside for people. Children at the Pavement Club crave affection, desperately jumping on you until you are literally buried beneath them. The children who have experienced all that EMC offer for any length of time, despite all their problems, glow with a sparkle in their eye and a smile that is both challenging and reflects a restored potential for a future. Background and problems are irrelevant, as Mrs Pavamani says, their role is to remain "unshockable" and to love and accept in a totally non-judgmental way, grace which God has largely endowed them with. We have been humbled by the hospitality and simplicity of those living in the slum areas.

The individuality of those the mission reaches out to is tremendously powerful. Each has a story, such as the youngest boy in the Pauline Bhevan home for abandoned railway children. He was rescued from the railway at 18 months and is now four. He calls Victor, the man who runs the home "daddy". He now lives in a stable community with several brothers, is bright, happy and is learning responsibilities as he takes his turn in sweeping, cleaning, and attends the



in a city

Calcutta Emmanuel School. Mrs Pavamani says "those who society threw away, God picked up".

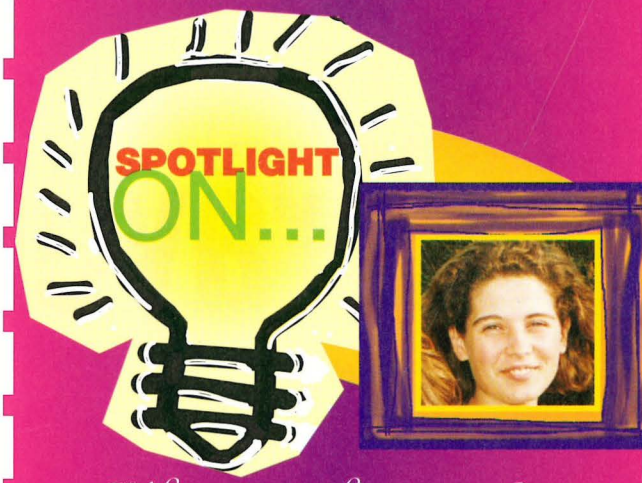
"Those society threw away, God picked up".

Emmanuel Ministries Calcutta was born when in true Abraham-like fashion, Vijayan Pavamani gave up the security of his job back in 1971 and with his wife opened their home for those in distress as a befriending, listening and counselling service (and 65 people appeared on the lawn the next day) The secular work of Calcutta Samaritans continued to grow, addressing addicts needs, initially by hosting them in the Pavamani's home and offering love and acceptance, growing to the development of the first rehabilitation homes in the area. The Pavamani's vision in this area is quite extraordinary; they responded to a need unrecognised by agencies and the government until at least a decade later.

The ministry continued to grow in response to the situations that the Pavamani's encountered on a daily basis and felt burdened to change. For example the school for underprivileged children, who could not afford the standard fee in Calcutta schools, began with only ten children. Those teaching realised the intense hunger of the pupils, and built in free school meals. Today the school has expanded to over three hundred. The "Pavement Club" for street children literally began with Vijayan having tea and befriending children. Now a feeding, washing and informal educational and recreational project exists with plans to expand it to five hundred, pending a suitable building and in order to meet the growing need.

Calcutta as a whole is a warm and friendly city and the people's ingenuity and courage are truly an example to us all. It is unique in many ways, embracing its own characteristics. However, it also contains many typical aspects of city life, and so is universal. Can you respond to the needs you see around you, wherever you are in the world? It only requires faith as small as a mustard seed! ●

Louise, Sarah, Jon and David are the four members of the 1997/98 India Action Team



Where are they now?

...Rachel Stephenson

RACHEL STEPHENSON (Nepal and Thailand 93/94) was part of a team of four girls who divided their time between the Gandaki Boarding School in Pokhara, Nepal and the New Life Centre in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

She remembers with joy the honesty and affection she shared with other team members. "The time that I spent away has influenced me and my life in countless ways. It has given me an amazing focus for my life: to serve God wherever I am, however I can".

After a year in university, a summer placement found Rachel back in Asia, leading bible studies, preaching and singing. On one occasion, she even tried to explain the principles of engineering to a class of girls who spoke about two sentences of English (and seven different Indian languages) between them!

For Rachel this was confirmation of her call to India: "I did not think for one minute that it would be easy to give up all that life offers me here but I knew that I had to trust my whole future to God including where I should be."

While she waits for the right opportunity to return to the subcontinent, Rachel is spearheading outreach into her university - starting with the Christian Union Freshers' Week programme, encouraging new students to hear God's call on their lives.

Prayer *focus*

ASIA

Ruth Bartlett
Surkhet Nepal

Please pray for Ruth who went out to Nepal in December 1997 as a BMS volunteer under the Barnabas Project following many months of prayer for a visa to come through. Ruth is working with the International Nepal Fellowship (INF) as a primary school teacher - something of a challenge as her previous experience has been with middle school aged children. There are eleven pupils in the school, all the children of English, American and Dutch INF or UMN (United Mission to Nepal) workers.

Please pray:

- **for a quick adjustment to Nepali life and language and for complete dependence on God**
- **for good relationships with the children, colleagues and local Nepalis**
- **that Ruth would enjoy the experience and benefit from it herself**

BRAZIL

Peggy and Frank Gouthwaite
Salvador, BRAZIL

The Gouthwaites are involved in helping their local community in a number of ways. Peggy has been sharing Bible stories at a community centre primary school attached to their church. The children there have all failed several years of schooling and are rebellious, sceptical and feel hopeless.

Frank has been having discussions with local Baptist leaderships on new initiatives – often slow work, but they have agreed on two priorities for 1998. The first is to reactivate the N Betel community centre. The church named a committee to work with Frank and at the first meeting he found six of the seven members had never been to the centre.

The second project is to produce a book of songs and choruses to raise awareness of Christian social responsibility. This will be circulated amongst the ninety churches in the local Association together with a planned tape featuring groups from the various churches.

Please pray:

- **for support from others as Frank seeks to fulfil the Baptist leadership's decision to reactivate the community centre**
- **for guidance as to Peggy's future involvement with the school children**
- **that the song book could be used as a catalyst to deepen the theology and active faith of the Association's church members**

EUROPE

Stuart and Joyce Filby
Ostende, BELGIUM

Church planting is difficult work in Belgium although some of the pressures have eased since the Baptist Union was finally accepted as an official denomination by the Belgian government in December 1997. Before that, Baptists were considered to be a cult, making it difficult to encourage new people.

Stuart and Joyce's church used to meet in their house but has now outgrown this. After a long period of searching they have been granted permission to rent a building three Sundays per month but still need a home for the other Sunday and for midweek. At present, 40-50 adults plus children meet each Sunday and the church are praying this will double by the end of the year.

Of their work Stuart and Joyce say: "Reaching out to folk and loving them....is a slow and sometimes exhausting task. It is so easy to get disappointed because folks, including believers, seem so reluctant to go on with God – but there are some encouragements too! We are so thankful to the Lord for the privilege of working with these folks and seeing how their contagious love is reaching out to others."

Please pray:

- **for health – Joyce has had several months of ill health and Stuart is very tired**
- **for a permanent solution to the problem of a meeting place**
- **that God would encourage new and not so new believers to grow in him continually**

News from BMS colleagues and partners around the world to complement the BMS Prayer Guide

28:19 Italian Action Team
Barletta, ITALY

The Action Team scheme began in 1990 with just one team of six people. This year sees 31 young people based in Italy, France, Portugal, India, Zimbabwe, Brazil, UK and Thailand. The overseas teams return to the UK in April so they are now beginning the difficult task of preparing to leave behind the people who have become family over the past few months.

Jenny, Katrina, Dave and Andy are working in Italy and they speak of the incredible welcome they have been given by everyone at the Barletta church where they are based. The church is small, consisting of around 30 people, 20 of whom are members of the same family.

The team have been involved in every aspect of church life, particularly in the music and working with the youth group and have been able to build good friendships as well as being seen as 'leaders'. Many of the young people come to church with their parents and it is often difficult to tell what their level of personal commitment is so it has been an important witness for our young people to speak about this year they have each chosen to dedicate to our Lord.

Please pray:

- **that each team would see good fruit from their efforts in their final month overseas**
- **every team member will experience reverse culture shock, pray their families and friends would be able to deal with this sensitively and pray for wisdom for those who will be involved in the debriefing process**
- **pray the teams would have good, creative ideas for their tour**
- **pray for the UK churches making preparations for the teams to visit them in May and June**

BRAZIL

Andy and Linda Eaves
Fortaleza, BRAZIL

The Eaves work with the people of the Railway Favela (so named as it stretches alongside a railway track) through a social action project run by the first Baptist Church of Fortaleza. The project is becoming an active presence in the community, and will ultimately be part of a larger charity which the church is presently trying to set up.

Alongside this project, many other initiatives have sprung up, begun by the Eaves or by church members. A card-making business begun by Linda seems to have taken off. She invested in some craft tools whilst in the UK and has since been teaching some of the women from the favela to make cards which are then sold in both Brazil and the UK. Another initiative is soup distribution which was begun one day a week by two church members. Andy has since taken over the organisation and now 65 families in the favela receive hot soup three times a week. It is hard work but Andy finds it an excellent contact point with the people. As well as this, he is also compiling a list of the unemployed who participate in the church's project, trying to match them up with employers looking for workers.

Taken individually, these projects may seem small scale but to the people receiving help, they can be valued beyond measure. In these circumstances, they are also the clearest way to show the love of God.

Please pray:

- **for opportunities for church members to speak naturally of Jesus as they reach out physically**
- **that church members will be motivated to help wherever they can**
- **strength for Andy and Linda to carry out their work, they also have two young children - Lucy and Isabel**
- **more God-inspired initiatives to meet the physical needs of the people in the favelas**

Around the world

TAKE 2

Take 2
a resource for church leaders & workers

RESOURCES *for leaders*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

No 'Foreign' Mission

In "News" on page 8 of the January/February 1998 issue of ***mb***, reporting the nomination of Revd Andrew Rigden Green as the next Vice-President of BMS, we read of his vision to make a connection "between evangelism and foreign mission".
That word "foreign" leapt out at me, because I recall so well the late Revd E G Rudman (Holland Road Baptist Church, Hove, 1947-1972), one of the wisest sages and spiritually-motivated ministers the Baptist Union has produced this century, declaring his abhorrence of this word in connection with Christian mission. He, rightly in my view, held that this word was not in the vocabulary of God, and that our Lord Jesus Christ made it clear that "the field is the world" (Matt 13:38) and commanded his disciples to "go into all the world and preach the gospel" (Mark 16:15). It is noteworthy that the Bible Society dropped the formal designation "British and Foreign" long ago. The Church's Mission is a world mission and the United Kingdom is as much part of the world as any other nation. To maintain the use of the word "foreign" is an unnecessary arrogance. ●

Yours truly
Ronald W T Thorns
Littlehampton, West Sussex.

abolishing the slavery of debt.

New Vice-President announced

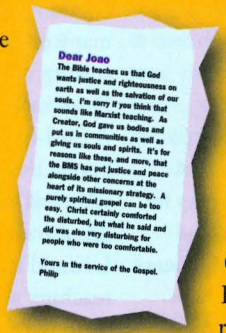
Revd Andrew Rigden Green, Senior Pastor at Upton Vale Baptist Church, Torquay has been nominated as the next Vice-President of BMS for the year 1998/99, which will result in him becoming BMS President leading up to the Millennium 1999/2000.

The voting for the new Vice-President is usually taken at the following March General Committee, but because of the strategic nature of this important year, and the need to plan ahead for

The Church's Real Work

I do not know if Joao's letters (Jan/Feb 1998 ***mb***) were real or just an editorial ploy to get correspondence flowing, but to my mind Joao had the best of the exchange.
The Good News of the Gospel is that mankind has been saved from the consequence of its own spiritual and moral follies.
Mankind's essential response (so often omitted in the current emphasis on the love of God) is repentance. This firmly anchors the transaction in the spiritual realm, because the offer is salvation from sin, not from social ills.
Good works, individual or collectively as Social Justice, are the outward and visible sign of the Holy Spirit, and are in no way to be despised or neglected, but they are a secondary manifestation of that Spirit.
If the primacy of the spiritual condition of humanity is not acknowledged, then we become secular humanists with our concern centred not on God, but on man. We become in fact identical with the world, focused upon 'Issues' and 'Rights'. The church, over-anxious to be popular, has gladly but mistakenly taken this view as its own. It has become a fellow-traveller with the secular, considering the journey as applied Christianity.
But a vision restricted to human desires is not applied Christianity; it is applied materialism.
Joao has recognised a danger of which Philip Clements-Jewery seems unaware. It is certainly condescending of him to dismiss Joao's insight that the only real struggle is spiritual as shallow or an easy opt-out from the "real" work of the church.
Baptist Praise and Worship may have been carefully cleansed of any hymns which have a militaristic theme, but nevertheless the spiritual battle is still paramount.
Joao, in the front line, is well aware of that. ●

Yours faithfully
K W Anstey
Rugby, Warwickshire.


Dear Joao
The Bible teaches us that God wants justice and righteousness on earth as well as the salvation of our souls. I'm sorry if you think that sounds like Marxist teaching. As Creator, God gave us bodies and put us in communities as well as giving us souls and spirits. It's for reasons like these, and more, that the BMS has put justice and peace alongside other concerns at the heart of its missionary strategy. A purely spiritual gospel can be too easy. Christ certainly comforted the disturbed, but what he said and did was also very disturbing for people who were too comfortable.

Yours in the service of the Gospel.
Philip

How are you doing with the Nestlé boycott?

This advertisement for Nestlé products was spotted and photographed in inner city Patan, Nepal by Jo Harding of Oldham.

TAKE 2

Take 2
a resource for church leaders & workers

RESOURCES *for leaders*

The world's biggest cities:

Population millions, latest year

1	Seoul	**10.80**
2	Bombay	**9.93**
3	Sao Paulo	**9.84**
4	Rio de Janeiro	**9.84**
5	Shanghai	**8.76**
6	Moscow	**8.75**
7	Mexico	**8.24**
8	Jakarta	**8.22**
9	Tokyo	**7.83**
10	Istanbul	**7.33**

The world's highest urban population:

% of population living in urban areas, latest year

1	Bermuda	**100**
2	Singapore	**100**
3	Guadeloupe	**99**
4	Macau	**99**
5	Kuwait	**97**
6	Hong Kong	**95**
7	Martinique	**93**
8	Venezuela	**93**
9	Iceland	**91**
10	Qatar	**91**

The world's lowest urban population:

% of population living in urban areas, latest year

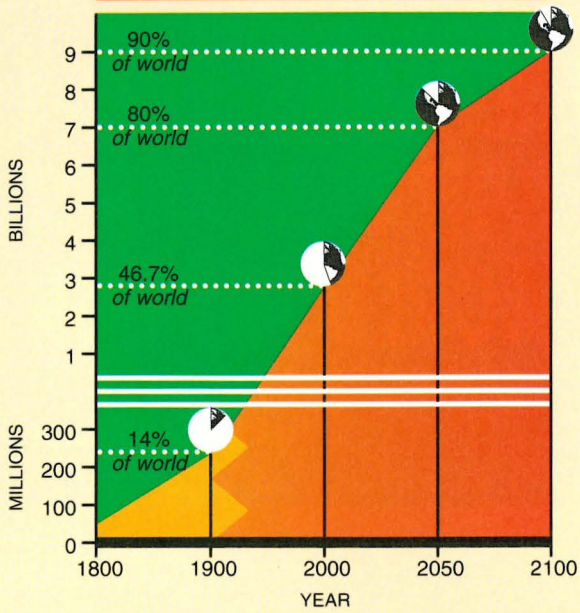
1	Bhutan	**6**
2	Rwanda	**6**
3	Burundi	**8**
4	Ethiopia	**13**
5	Oman	**13**
6	Uganda	**13**
7	Malawi	**14**
8	Nepal	**14**
9	Papua New Guinea	**16**
10	Niger	**17**

Urban Populations in Countries with BMS links

Albania	**35%**
Angola	**28%**
Bangladesh	**16%**
Belgium	**97%**
Brazil	**75%**
Central African Republic	**47%**
Democratic Republic of Congo	**40%**
El Salvador	**44%**
France	**74%**
India	**27%**
Indonesia	**31%**
Italy	**69%**
Nepal	**14%**
Nicaragua	**60%**
Portugal	**34%**
Sri Lanka	**21%**
Thailand	**23%**
UK	**89%**
Zimbabwe	**28%**

CUT & DETATCH

THE RISE OF URBAN POPULATION



The Bible and Cities

Gen 4:17 The first mention of a city in the Bible - Cain built a city
Gen 11:4 The city of Babel - the focus of human pride
Num 35:6-15, Josh 20 Cities of refuge
2 Sam 5 Jerusalem - the city of David
Luke 19:41 Jesus wept over Jerusalem
Rev 21 History ends with a city, the new Jerusalem

"Then I saw a new earth (with no oceans!) and a new sky, for the present earth and sky had disappeared. And I, John, saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven. It was a glorious sight, beautiful as a bride at her wedding. I heard a loud shout from the throne saying, 'Look, the home of God is now among men, and he will live with them and they will be his people; yes, God himself will be among them. He will wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor pain. All of that has gone forever."

(Rev 21:1-4, Living Bible)

7 REASONS WHY I DON'T SUPPORT WORLD MISSION

(And seven reasons why you should)

by Fred Stainthorpe

1 I'm not interested in it

God does not expect us to be interested in world mission. He expects our obedience. We choose our interests and hobbies, and we can indulge in them whenever we wish. Mission, however, is an obligation. Jesus told us to go into all the world. He has never withdrawn nor lessened this command. On the last day he will not ask what we thought about mission, but what we did about it.

2 I don't know much about it

Neither did the apostles until the day of Pentecost! Up to that point they were concerned entirely with their own nation, but the Holy Spirit inspired them to preach first to Jews, then to Gentiles, and gradually the Church spread. As communications and education have improved, so it is now much easier to gather information about overseas mission. BMS has a wealth of resources available for you to tap into, for a start! Nobody need remain ignorant.

3 There is enough Christian work for us to do in this country

This seems to be true at first sight, but the Church here only exists because Christians long ago took the opposite point of view. They heard of these islands and said, "Jesus has told us to go there also". Without their wider outlook, there would be no Christians here to do any work. Christian resources in terms of personnel, material goods and money are vastly greater here than in many other countries. Is it fair to keep it all to ourselves? Whoever makes this excuse is busy sawing off the branch on which they are sitting.

4 Our Church leaders aren't interested

You're not the only one to say this! Even pastors and elders can suffer from myopic glaucoma (or short-sighted tunnel vision). However they are just as responsible to Jesus as we are, and probably more so. Start praying for them, and ask God to give them a wider vision. Then ask them to promote world mission more, and ask them how your church can become more involved in World Mission Link.

5 I thought that missionaries were not needed any more

It is true that in many countries the pioneer stage of missions is over. Others have hacked their way through the jungle and mapped the rivers. Now national leaders have emerged to shepherd the church, but they still need specialised help in areas like theological training, medical work, agricultural and social projects. Young churches themselves need to gain a missionary vision; some countries are hardly touched by the gospel and churches in other countries are crying out for help. There is little likelihood of missionaries having to haunt Job Centres.

6 I'm afraid of what I would let myself in for

At least you're being very honest! Often our reasons for not supporting missions are cover-ups. We feel that God may want us to get involved in mission and we fear the cost. How much will we lose out if we obey a missionary call? Yet missionary experience has shown that in giving out anything for him will get back far more. We actually lose out by refusing to obey the call if and when it comes.

7 We need missionaries in this country too

True, Britain has certainly stopped being a Christian country if ever it was one. Paganism and scepticism have grown (but whose fault is this?) We do need to be missionaries to our own people. Is this reason merely an excuse to get others to do what we are unwilling to do ourselves?

The WAY I SEE IT

ANOTHER EXTRACT FROM THE (WHOLLY IMAGINARY) PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE OF **PHILIP CLEMENTS–JEWERY**

DEAR MARGARET

How are things now where you are? I read in my newspaper the other day that economically the country is going from bad to worse with raging inflation and shortages of almost everything. I also gather that the recent change of Government hasn't really made all that much difference What I wonder is, couldn't the churches have had more influence so that the country didn't get into the state it is? Christians make up quite a high proportion of the population, but that doesn't seem to have had much effect on the life of the nation as such. As a missionary, what is your perspective on the situation? Please write again soon.

Yours,

Philip

DEAR PHILIP

Thanks for your letter. It's good to know that you have us here in your thoughts and prayers. It's actually very difficult to persuade the leaders of the church in this country that they ought to seek to influence the Government. Partly that's because they want to make a complete separation between Christianity and politics; partly it's because they have freedom at present to proclaim the gospel and they don't want to endanger that; and partly it's because some of them have relatives in high positions in the civil service and they don't want them to lose their jobs. The situation doesn't seem as simple as it might from Britain.

Yours in Christ,

Margaret

DEAR MARGARET

I understand the sensitive position that the national Christians feel themselves to be in, but behind it might there not have been a failure of missionary policy? In the past (and still today) we've preached the gospel, given medical help to the sick, taught modern agricultural methods, provided schooling for the young and so on but the one thing we never thought of doing is educate the people for democracy. It does seem to me that this sort of thing ought to be a vital part of the church's contribution to the life of developing countries. I would have thought that participation in church meetings ought to have been an excellent preparation in citizenship, but maybe the connection was never pointed out. It may not, after all, be so surprising that corruption is endemic over there and that one dictatorship is followed by another. However, I believe that the new regime has yet to settle in fully and gain the support and trust of the people, so could the situation be turned around? Do let me know how things work out

Your fellow-worker in the gospel,

Philip

What do you think? Take part in this debate. Write to us in about 120 words:
BMS, Baptist House, 129 Broadway, Didcot, Oxon, OX11 8XA or Email: bms_media@cin.co.uk

Action Card

Middle East focus

Some Christians may be puzzled as to why this, evidently Muslim building, features in the church-sponsored Action Card series. Apart from making a dramatic impact, the Dome of the Rock represents - one might say embodies - the claim of the Palestinian people to be treated as equals (not betters) in the land which is genuinely home to both Israeli and Palestinian. Nor should we write 'Jew and Muslim' at that point. For not all Israeli citizens are Jews; paradoxically nearly one million are Arabs. Nor are all Palestinians Muslim. Around 2 percent of them, about half still living in Jerusalem and the Occupied Territories, are Christians.

The routine closing off of Jerusalem to Palestinians from the West Bank or Gaza is a matter of economic injustice, moral dubiety and political desperation as well as being personally destructive of many lives and livelihoods. The city is simply out of bounds for trade, health care, family get-togethers and, of course, for prayers at this central mosque. To punish a whole people for the (undoubted) evil actions of a few is like imposing a curfew on the Bogside because some bombers live there or confining black South Africans to the townships for similar reasons. Hamas and the other terror organisations will not be defeated by counter-terror; security for Israel depends on peace with justice for all.

It is understandable that even such equitable support for Palestinians, whether Christian or Muslim, draws so much antagonism from so many European and American Christians for whom Israel represents still the Jewish people who have suffered so much that we must not criticise them at all. If you would like to offer a word of hope to beleaguered fellow Christians, send your message (better in an envelope, not as an open postcard) to Nora Carmi, Administrator, Sabeel Christian Centre, PO Box 1248, Jerusalem, Israel. ●

BMS, Baptist Union, Christians Aware, Church of Scotland, Methodist Church, United Reformed Church.

Does your Church want a piece of the UK Action?

BMS is looking for ONE MONTH placements in churches beginning October 1998 until April 1999 for the next UK Action Team. The Team this year will consist of four young people, three from overseas and one from the UK, normally two females, and two males aged between 18 - 25. They are a creative and lively group of young people whose desire is to work with children and young people, and raise an exciting awareness of mission. The Team is trained and equipped with resources for them to work with your children and your youth groups, your assemblies and schools, your Sunday school classes and your youth weekends.

We ask that you host the Team and provide a programme for them for a month or longer, if possible, in your church, or in a number of churches in your area. We only ask that their host home could be the same for the duration.

This year's UK Team, complete with guitar and conga drums, puppets and overheads, dramas and songs, have been working with schools and churches, and leading Sunday services. They have continually proved to have been a real blessing to everyone wherever they have gone, and BMS is very proud of them.

You've heard of the 28:19 Action Teams, and you probably know that BMS sent seven Action Teams overseas during 1997/1998, but did you know that there is an Action Team based in the UK ready and waiting for you to use?

Fiona Pimlott, Youth and Children's Co-ordinator is responsible for the UK Team placements, so please call her for more information on 01235 512077, or get in touch with your local BMS Co-ordinator.

CHARITY COMMISSION

Charity ***ANGOLA AND DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO MEDICAL FUND***

Scheme for the regulation of the Charity

Reference: AS/27959/CD(T)

The Charity Commissioners have made a Scheme for this charity. A copy can be seen for the next month at the Baptist Missionary Society, P O Box 49, Baptist House, 129 Broadway, Didcot, Oxfordshire, OX11 8XA or a copy can be obtained by sending a stamped addressed envelope to The Charity Commission, Woodfield House, Tangier, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 4BL, quoting the reference above.

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Checkout

Missionary Movements

MARCH	APRIL
Arrivals	**Arrivals**
David & Janet Kerrigan from Colombo	Jenny Dorman from Kathmandu
Derek & Joanna Punchard from Curitiba	John & Lesley Moody from Curitiba
Departures	**Departures**
David & Janet Kerrigan to Colombo	Derek & Joanna Punchard to Curitiba
	David & Catherine McLellan to Kathmandu

The Last Word

GERRY MYHILL

Gerry Myhill is a BMS missionary working in Antonina, Brazil

Why is it that some people seem to have one set of rules for themselves and a different set for other people? This phenomenon often manifests itself and I have yet to experience an occasion when it has brought God's blessing and positive results.

While visiting one church I was criticised strongly by a certain lady who felt that I wasn't being spiritual enough in carrying myself and everyone else to a permanent mountain top experience. It was her opinion that I was being hampered by demons. Shortly afterwards this same lady led what we would call the "Ladies bright Hour" group on a ramble, to hold a prayer meeting in the shade of the town water tank. There the glory of the Lord would come down, and they were guaranteed a mountain-top experience. The water tank, whose shape puts one in mind of a flying saucer, was supported on concrete pillars about 60 feet high. Because of constantly dripping water, there was a lush growth of plants and bushes beneath it and lots of wildlife, including tree frogs. Tree frogs are fascinating little creatures, some of them brightly coloured, all of them olympic jumpers and possessing little suction cups on their feet.

Arriving at the vicinity of the water tank, our good lady formed up her group in a circle around her, then, in order to prepare the ground for their spiritual experience, she demanded that if Satan were present, then he should manifest himself, presumably so that they could exorcise him. Almost immediately she began to jump up and down screeching loudly enough to threaten the very foundations of the water tower whilst her companions began to beat her with their Bibles to drive out what they felt to be a demonic presence.

It turned out that one of the bug-eyed, suction-footed, olympic jumpers had broken all records and had hit the jackpot, diving straight down the front of her dress. Needless to say the meeting broke up without having reached the mountain top.

> "...her companions began to beat her with their Bibles to drive out what they felt to be a demonic presence."

Later, when I innocently inquired how the meeting had gone, suggesting that it was dangerous to ask Satan to manifest himself, she replied, "Oh no Pastor, it was only a little tree frog!" Applying one set of rules to ourselves and a different set for others can lead us into all sorts of situations where we justify ourselves and condemn others.

Recently, a lady from Potinga made us all laugh. It had been raining heavily in the mountains and within hours, the swollen rivers reaching the valley caused many homes and farmsteads to be flooded. This particular lady risked her life, entering the racing flood waters to rescue her fowls. She made it safely back to high ground only to have it pointed out to her that she had saved 16 ducks and left her chickens to the mercy of the waters! The ducks were protesting at having been rescued!

Perhaps instead of laughing we ought to consider what we would have done in a similar situation, under pressure. Aren't we perhaps applying a double set of rules? I wouldn't be fool enough to do what she did. If the truth be known, I would probably have managed to drown the ducks and myself as well, which is what I think we do when we thoughtlessly criticise others. ●

ILLUSTRATION BY SARAH PRENTICE

TaKE the RiSK

This multi-media event will challenge you to Take a Risk for God in your lives...

1998 TOUR

BIRMINGHAM	GLASGOW	NEWCASTLE
CARDIFF	KENT	NOTTINGHAM
CHELTENHAM	LEEDS	PLYMOUTH
COLCHESTER	LIVERPOOL	SOUTHAMPTON
EDINBURGH	LONDON SW	WATFORD
	MANCHESTER	

Drama directed by Rob Lacey one of the country's leading Christian performers.
Music provided by Paul Northup and the band, ex-Eden Burning.
Spectacular set and stage effects by Cheltenham Stage services.
Fast moving multi-media.
Insight from Martin Pearse BMS President And YMCA Director.
Food for thought!

Tickets and more information can be obtained from your local BMS Co-ordinator, or call head office on 01235 512077 and ask to speak to Ruth Berry. Tickets cost £4.00 each (concessions for the unemployed and students at £3.50 with ID). A group of eight coming to Take the Risk will receive the eighth ticket free. So this is a Risk you can afford to Take.

TaKE the RiSK, CS Dept, BMS, Baptist House, 129 Broadway, Didcot, Oxon, OX11 8XA.

MAY/JUNE 1998

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mb

NO.1 MISSION MAGAZINE
FIRST FOR FEATURES
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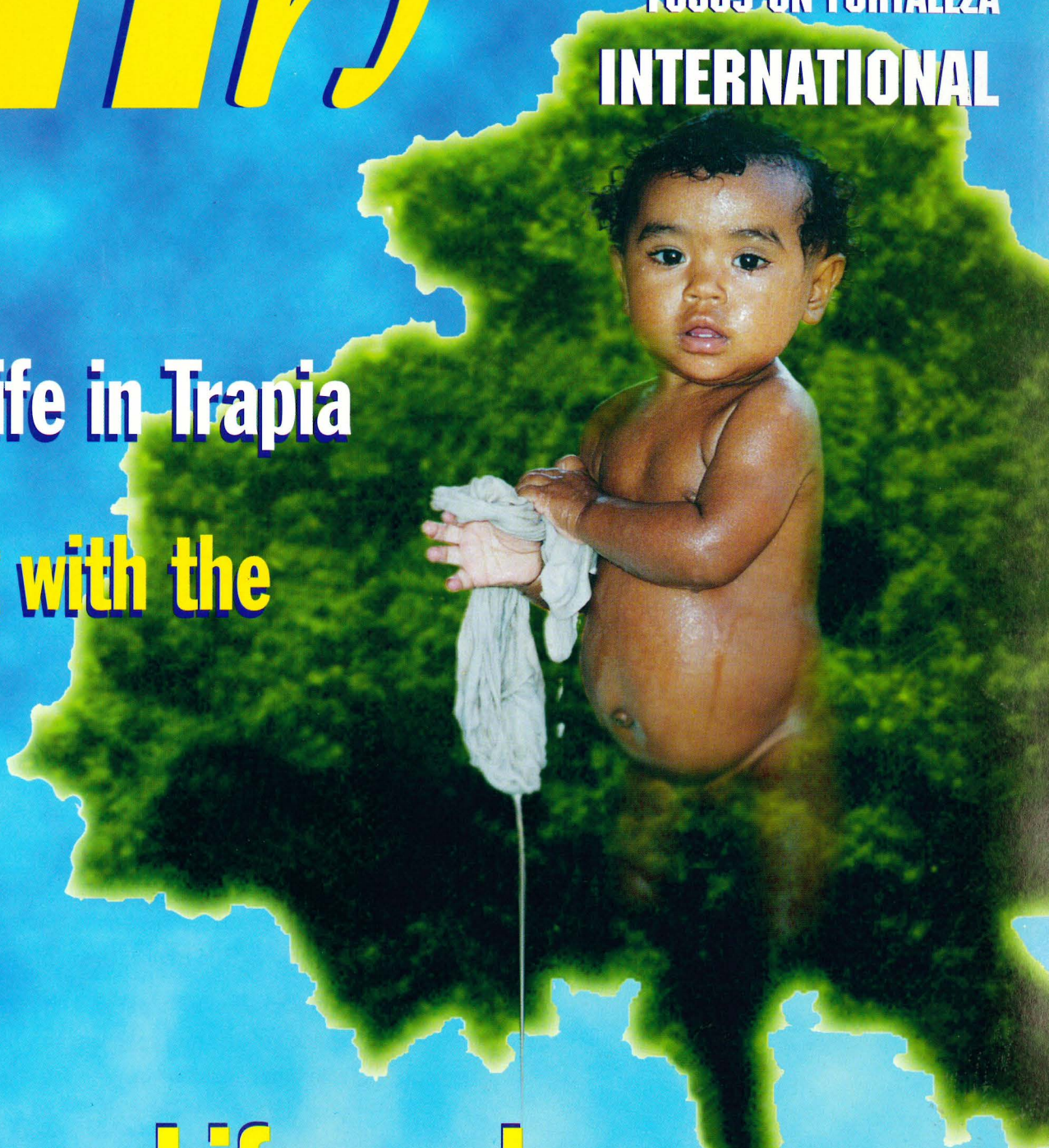
INTERNATIONAL

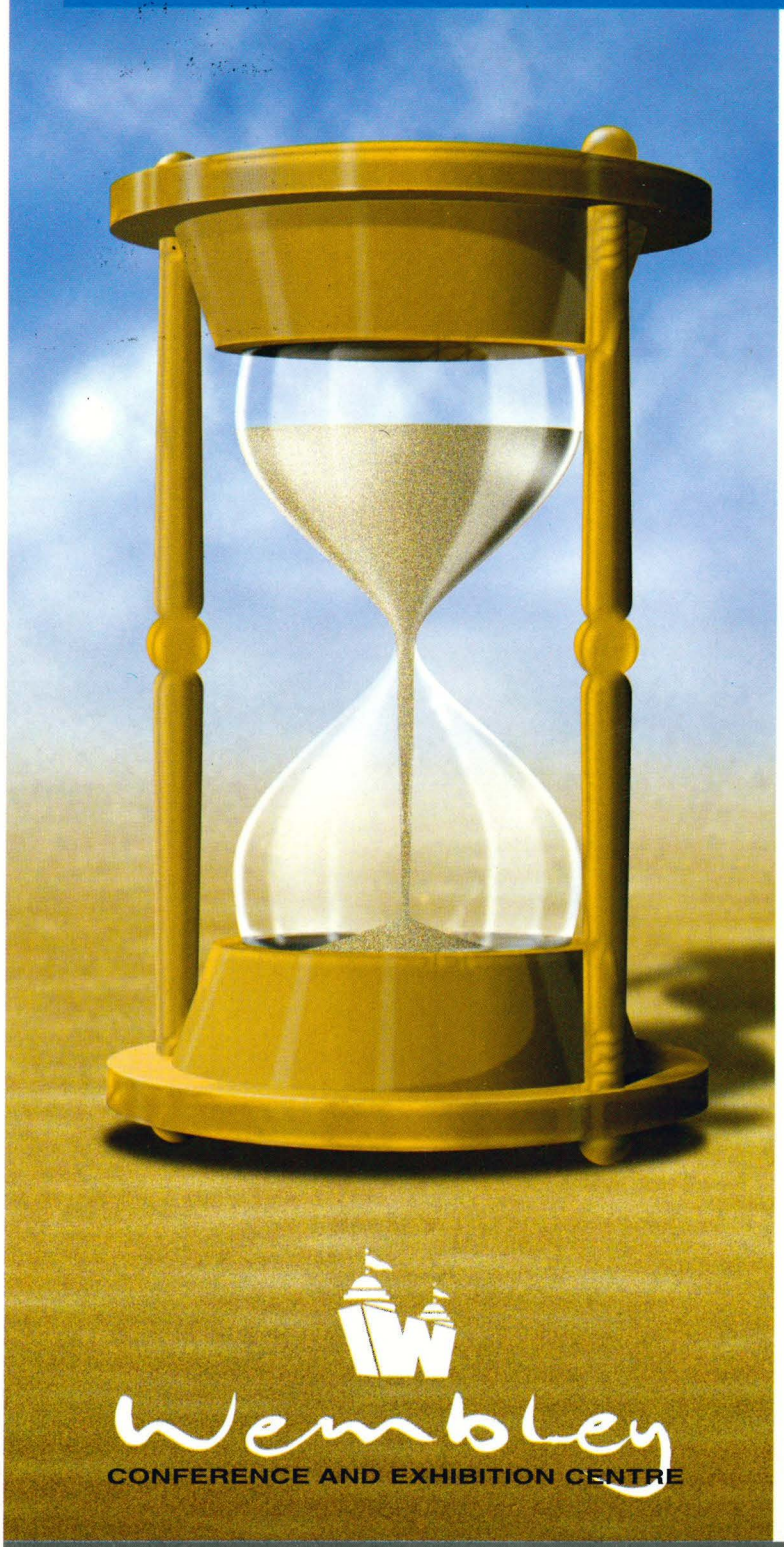


New life in Trapia

Living with the Mafia

Life and death issues

The next Millennium starts on 13th March 1999...



NATIONAL BAPTIST LEADERS' DAY

WEMBLEY CONFERENCE CENTRE
SATURDAY 13TH MARCH 1999

SHAPING THE FUTURE OF THE BAPTIST UNION FOR THE NEXT MILLENNIUM

This is the chance for every Baptist church in the UK to be in at the start of something new. Share with us as we prepare for the millennium ahead.

Time: 1400 - 1900, Doors open 1300.

Speaker: David Coffey, General Secretary of the Baptist Union of Great Britain.

Food is available at Wembley Conference Centre.

Tickets for this unique event are just £10.00 each, available from 'National Baptist Leaders Day', BUGB, at the Didcot address below. Please make cheques payable to 'The Baptist Union of Great Britain'.

Wembley is easy to get to, with plenty of parking space for cars and coaches, so why not get in touch with other churches in your area and share your travel arrangements.

13th March 1999. Put it in your diary now, and pass the message on!

NATIONAL BAPTIST LEADERS' DAY

BOOK IT UP. NOW

THE BAPTIST UNION OF GREAT BRITAIN, BAPTIST HOUSE, PO BOX 44, 129 BROADWAY, DIDCOT, OXFORDSHIRE, OX11 8RT
TEL: 01235 512077 **FAX:** 01235 811537 **E-MAIL** baptistuniongb@baptist.org.uk **WEBSITE** http://www.baptist.org.uk

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May/June

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LIFE AND DEATH ISSUES

Baptist Theological Seminary Library Prague Czech Republic

Jan Kendall

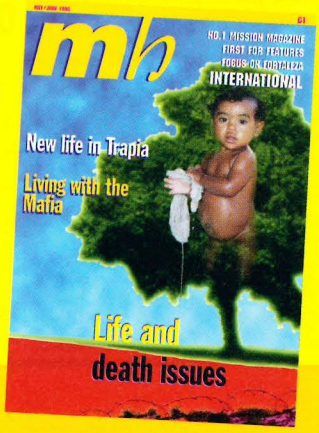
Death hasn't touched me very much even though I guess I'm what is called "middle-aged". As a child there was Josephine, my tortoise, who disappeared from the garden one day and I was told by my mother - no doubt for highly altruistic reasons - that she had gone to hospital. She was there such a long while that even I, in my naivety, twigged what had happened. Whilst a teenager there was the accidental death by carbon monoxide poisoning of a girl in my school year and the death of one or two elderly relatives. Latterly one or two more relatives have died, and also our two dogs. But that's it.

Now my experience might be unusual, I don't know. I do know, as indeed we all do, that tragedies do hit us both individually and as communities. Of course they do. And as a society that's geared up to counselling as a way of coping, it's surprising that death is still the great taboo, efficiently sanitised and boxed away. Maybe things are easing a little. Princess Diana's death allowed people en masse to show that open grief was allowable. Perhaps it's a reflection on our society that what colours our attitudes to death also spills over into thoughts on life and living – or is it the other way round? We're trying to unpack a little of that thinking in this issue, contrasting attitudes to life and death around the world. It makes interesting reading, I can assure you!

As always, we have all your favourite features and items, plus we welcome Philip Webb as cartoonist in the Take 2 section.

Do keep writing in; we love receiving your letters with comments, suggestions and encouragements, knowing that we're working together to make world mission a priority in our daily lives and service.

Jan



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THE LOCAL CHURCH IN MISSION

BMS PUBLICATIONS

News

News in Brief

Australia
The need for reconciliation between aboriginal Australians and other Australians led the Queensland Baptist Convention to ask forgiveness for their failures and to commit themselves wholeheartedly to ensure that past atrocities against the Aborigines never happen again. (BWA News)

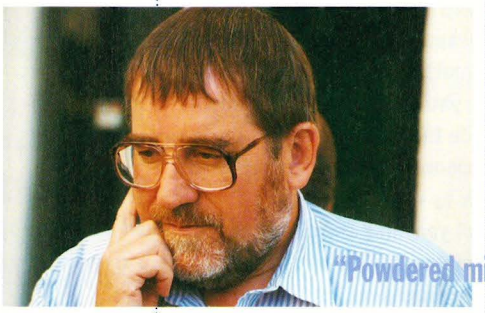
Malta
Baptists in Malta now hold open air Sunday night services with singing, testimonies and preaching in Maltese. There is also an Arabic meeting every Saturday at the church for Arab-speaking people, and this continues to grow. (BWA News)

Russia
Russia's Ministry of Justice has openly declared one section of the new law on church-state relations to be unconstitutional in informal guidelines recently distributed to provincial officials. The guidelines are generally less restrictive than the draft regulations which are now under discussion in Moscow. The Baptist World Alliance is still continuing to call for full religious freedom. (BWA News)

India
Missionaries and other volunteers are taking part in an initiative, which includes prayer and handing out specially produced leaflets to pilgrims as they travel to Haridwar in India's Uttar Pradesh state. Several million people make this pilgrimage seeking forgiveness of sin, and immortality, by bathing in the waters of the sacred River Ganges during the three-yearly Kumbh Mela event. (YWAM News)

Sierra Leone
People in Sierra Leone are continuing to suffer greatly from the sanctions and embargo placed on the country. Moses Khanu, General Secretary of the Baptist Convention says, "the lifestyle of every ordinary Sierra Leonean has been reduced to a beggar or a pauper." The European Baptist Mission compound in Lunsar - which includes houses, a conference centre and an eye hospital - has been ransacked. (BWA News)

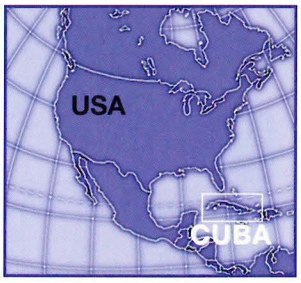
Cuba
Baptists can now send aid directly


Paul Montacute

Humanitarian supplies can now be sent directly to Baptist conventions in Cuba through Baptist World Aid (BWAid) it was announced recently. In the past aid had to be funnelled through the Ecumenical Council in Cuba, which is considered to be closely linked with the Cuban government.

This new possibility was announced after Paul Montacute, director for BWAid, had visited Cuba and had met with Silverio Platero in the government's Ministry of Religion. After much discussion Platero gave BWAid permission to send medicines and milk to the Baptist conventions and unions. Platero emphasised that no Bibles or religious books could be contained in the shipments as that would compromise the humanitarian goods.

Montacute promised that permission would be sought immediately from the United States government to ship a container of much needed items to Cuba. "Powdered milk is desperately needed," Montacute said, "this is generic and not specifically for children. Other needs are



children's food, roofing materials, and agricultural equipment, especially hand tools."

Whilst the situation on religious freedom is somewhat

"Powdered milk is desperately needed..."

improved, Baptists still have great difficulty in rebuilding and repairing churches that have been damaged through years of neglect. Many of the churches are in old parts of towns or cities and are subject to conservation laws that act as a barrier to rebuilding. This is especially the problem with El Cerro Baptist Church in Havana. The government has said whatever they build has to be within the framework of the existing building. (EBPS)

Netherlands
Gay Games outreach

An evangelistic outreach is being planned for Amsterdam when the city hosts the international Gay Games later this year.

Organisers believe as many as 500 people will take part in

the outreach, as an estimated 200,000-plus competitors and spectators gather in the city, widely known as the gay capital of Europe.

Amsterdam is the first city outside North America to stage the "homosexual

"We want to bring God's compassion into the streets of Amsterdam..."

Olympics", to be held 1 to 8 August. Arts and cultural presentations celebrating the gay lifestyle will run alongside the sporting events.

Those joining in the outreach, which is headed up by Youth With A Mission (YWAM), will share the

gospel with visitors through music, drama and literature distribution. "We're not setting out to attack gay people, or hit them over the head with the Bible," said YWAM's Rebecca Balderas. "We want to bring God's compassion into the streets of Amsterdam because he is still in the business of healing the broken-hearted. Many people have misconceptions about who God is. We want to reach them with the love of Christ. We believe that God has a purpose and destiny for each individual, and that a lot of people have accepted a counterfeit of what they can only find in a relationship with Jesus." (YWAM News)

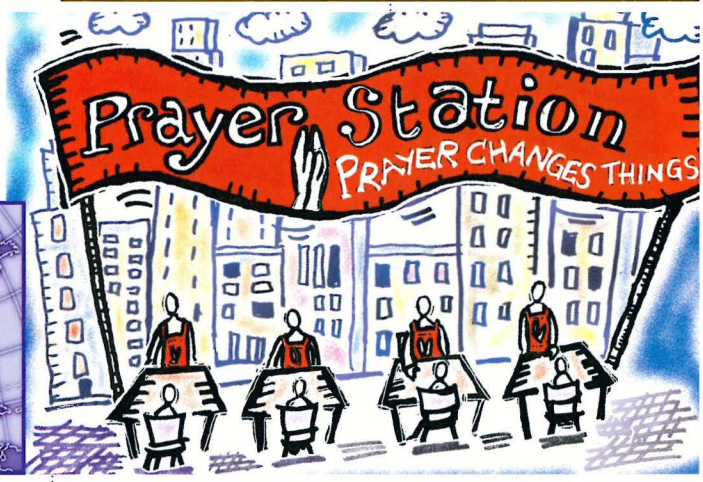
United States Disarming evangelism

Churches around the world are lining up to copy a simple programme that is reaching people's hearts in a way other outreach efforts often fail to.

After years of involvement in all kinds of evangelism in New York, it has been found that the most effective way to reach people is simply to stop them and ask them if there is anything they would like prayer for.

Nick Savoca, who is developing a training programme to help set up these Prayer Stations, comments: "It's so disarming. They are not being asked for money or being confronted aggressively. Instead we are asking if we can do something for them - it seems to touch people in a deeper way somehow, and across all social classes."

Enquiries with requests for help in setting up similar outreaches have now been received from all over the United States as well as Canada, Australia and Europe. The initiative has also been filmed by American and Dutch TV crews. (YWAM News)



Alistair Brown

Using the media

A dozen or more satellite dishes search the sky for signals. The location could be anywhere, but in fact it is southern Albania. The dishes are fixed to the walls of one of the poorest apartment blocks in virtually Albania's most

ravaged town, Vlora, scene of the worst riots a year ago.

Albania was starved of all outside contact until just a few years ago. Now people are hungry to know what the rest of the world is like. The poorer and more shut-off a country, the more people have satellite receiving equipment. It's a world-wide phenomena.

That's why BMS is a partner in SAT–7, transmitting Christian programming around the middle east. That's why we're pledged to increase our investment in spreading the gospel by the media. People hungry for knowledge should be fed the best there is.

Korea

Standing in the gap

A team of 74 students and staff from a Discipleship Training School in Kona, Hawaii, travelled to South Korea and shortly after arriving there began a 24-hour prayer vigil for North Korea. Their Training School leader, Mike Steinmeyer, sensed God wanted them to pray for this famine-ravaged country.

They were based just five miles from the Demilitarised Zone separating North and South Korea, and very soon the rumble of tanks and boom of artillery fire became commonplace.

Soldiers began to regularly visit these students and stayed for a game of football or for a cup of coffee or just a chat. One frequent visitor was a South Korean tank commander, whom staff and students led to faith in Christ.

The students have had to endure bitterly cold weather, food shortages and primitive living conditions. "It was hard for all of us, but learning to live together in these conditions created a special unity among us," said team leader Jennifer Barler. "In Kona we don't have to worry about where our next meal is coming from, but in Korea we have to be 100 per cent dependent on God."

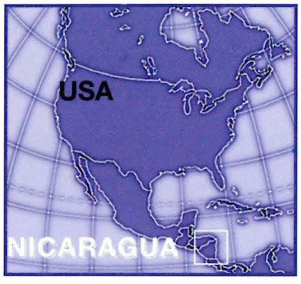
Having finished their training, the group divided into three teams. One team stayed on at the Demilitarised Zone to continue to intercede for the nation. "Korean Christians were surprised by how the Lord brought these young foreigners from many nations to stand in the gap for Korea," said leader Moses Kim . "They realised that reconciliation of both Koreas is an issue not only for Koreans but also for many Christians in other parts of the world." (YWAM News)

Nicaragua

Hidden cost of domestic violence

A recent study in Nicaragua has concluded that children from families in which women are subject to domestic violence are three times more likely to require medical care. In households where repeated serious physical violence against women has taken place, children are 100 times more likely to require hospitalisation.

The study which was conducted by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) went on to say that 63



per cent of children exposed to domestic violence have to repeat at least one school grade. On average they drop out of school at the age of nine, compared with age 12 for children of women who are not victims of severe abuse

Economic dependence often traps women in abusive situations. The study found

that 41 per cent of non-wage-earning women are victims of serious physical violence, while only ten per cent of women who have salaried jobs outside the home suffer such abuse. (LAP)

Erratum

SOON's website address appeared last issue without a much-needed hyphen. The correct address should read:

http://www.brigada.org/today/articles/web-evangelism.html

Inspiration, motivation, ideas, news on world mission for churches

World Mission Link

WOW Action Day

They ran around the world, did aerobics in a Brazilian forest, and were trapped under a purple parachute! And all because of ... a WOW Action Day. It was 31 January and 40 children and helpers at Heathfield Baptist Church in East Sussex gave it all they'd got learning about teamwork in world mission.

Songs, cardboard puppets, team games and a visit from Boomer the orang-utan all happened at some point between 10 am and 3 pm. Fiona Pimlott and Tracy Roslyn, from the BMS Youth and Children's Department, led the day. "A lot of children brought friends who don't go to church. It was a great opportunity to show them that world mission isn't boring." Special thanks to the church who provided a yummy cooked lunch for everyone!

Thank you John Maggs

BMS General Director Alistair Brown visited New Malden Baptist Church recently to pay tribute to John Maggs who had served on the church's missionary committee for over half a century.

John Maggs grew up as a member of the mission-supporting "League of Ropeholders" and stepped into his father's shoes as treasurer to the church's missionary committee in 1944; a role he continued in until the end of 1997.

John is characteristically modest about his impressive half-century of service. "When I started out there were people working with me who had been in their roles for 30 years, and they didn't think they were doing something exceptional," he recalls. "I think one of my qualities is stickability and this seems to be in short supply now. People want to or have to be on the move more these days!"

During John Maggs' treasurership the church has seen giving to BMS, Operation Agri and Tools With A Mission increase from £145 in 1944/5 to over £15,000 in 1996/7.

Alistair Brown presented John Maggs with an inscribed History of the BMS by Dr Brian Stanley, and praised his commitment which, he said, represented more than a quarter of the life of BMS.

Dates for your Diary

Events & Meetings

Cardiff
Wed 6 May
Wales WMA Annual Meetings at Tabernacl Baptist Church, Cardiff.
More information: Meriel Marsh 01443 831508

Brynmawr
Wed 20 May
Gwent WMA Rally at Calvary Bapt Ch.
More information: Sylvia Hamer 01495 225932

Glasgow
Mon 1 June
West of Scotland Women's Assoc BMS Summer Rally at Hillhead Bapt Ch.
More information: Freda Kennedy 0141 632 0883

Dalkeith
Wed 3 June
BMS event at Dalkeith Baptist Church
More information: Derek Clark 0141 775 1201

Llandrindod Wells
Thurs 4 June
Radnorshire and Montgomeryshire Assoc Annual Mtgs at Tabernacle Baptist Church
More information: Stephen Wood 01547 528443

Broadhaven
Sat 6 June
BU of Wales Engl Assbly. BMS service "Building the Church worldwide"
More information: Ifor Williams 01437 781235

Whetstone, Leics.
Sat 6 June
EMBA Assoc Day, Whetstone Bapt Ch.
More information: Mark Clay: 0116 286 3145

Rochdale
6 and 7 June
Rochdale churches BMS event
More information: Val Treaton 01706 522084

Solva, Pembs
Wed 10 June
Pembrokeshire WMA Rally
More information: Anna Williams 01239 820433

Lampeter
Wed 10 June
Carmarthen and Cardigan Assoc Annual Mtgs, BMS Service at Noddfa Baptist Church, of Lampeter
More information: Nesta Harries 01570 422143

Norton, Worcs
Sat 20 June
Worcester Association Day
More information: Betty Wheeler 01905 351893

Gateshead
20 and 21 June
Northern Family Association Day, Joseph Swan School, Gateshead
More information: Margaret Barnett 01207 504023

St Dogmaels
22 to 25 June
BU of Wales Welsh Assembly
More information: Gareth Hutchinson 01792 360909

Isle of Wight
28 June to 4 July
IOW Keswick with BMS Display.
More information: Phil Hindle 01823 698977

Birkenhead
Tues 30 June
Merseyside BWF and BMS Gift Day Rally, Laird Street, Birkenhead.
More information: Ann Ashworth 0151 427 6027

News

March General Committee

Two new candidates were accepted:

● Sylvie Bonser, a nursery nurse, will work with pre-school children in North Africa. Sylvie is a member of Leigh Road Baptist Church and has been a pre-school leader in her church playgroup, a governor of a local primary school and a small group leader of Alpha courses.

● Judy Cook, a Junior Sister at Birmingham Children's Hospital, will do nursing work, at a location yet to be agreed. Judy is a member of Barnt Green Baptist Church, Birmingham, and has been involved in Sunday School and leading her church youth club.

● General Committee voted to withdraw gradually the presence of long-term missionaries in Brazil over the next 12 years, handing over the work to Brazilian Partner Bodies, and increasing opportunities for volunteers and Action Teams. (Full story in Jul/Aug issue).

● BMS will apply to become a member of IAM (International Assistance Mission) with the hope and intention of working as an IAM partner in Afghanistan.

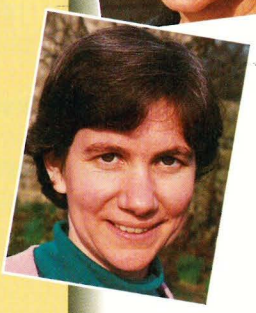
● Steps were taken to restructure, to face the challenges of the future. General Committee voted for the Board of Management to become charity trustees, whilst the Committee itself will adopt an advisory and consultative role, guiding the Board on policy matters. It also voted by a narrow majority to downsize, to allow for fuller involvement by its members. Number of meetings per year will stay at three.

Simon and Karen Collins

Simon and Karen Collins visited Angola for one month in March/April 1998 on a tourist visa. Whilst there they investigated the longer term visa situation and housing availability.

Stamp bureau

Stamp bureau: the total amount raised in 1997 from the sale of stamps, coins and cards was £6,771.



Sylvie Bonsor (top); Judy Cook (below)

Weaver of the Year Award

Starting in 1986 the Weaving Project was set up in Chandraghona, Bangladesh as part of a community health programme.

It is an income generating project for women at risk in the community who have no

other source of income. Many are widows or have been abandoned by their husbands. Some were prostitutes, and all were trapped in poverty. By taking part in this project they learn a traditional skill and become useful members of society who are able to support themselves and their families.

At the recent award ceremony acknowledging the year's best weaver and best spinner Miss Miriam McIntosh, the Deputy British High Commissioner in Bangladesh was the Chief Guest. A wrist watch was presented to the best weaver, Mrs Khaleda Begum, who has been with the project for seven years. Mrs Marma received a thermos flask as best spinner.

News in Brief

Bangladesh

Church grows slowly

News has come from the Bangladesh Baptist Sangha that 16 men and 19 women have been baptised in the Dinajpur area of Bangladesh in 1997. Seven new churches have also been established.

The Director of the Social Health and Education Development (SHED) Board, James A Singh, writes "We sowed the seeds of the gospel of Christ in some places... Now it has been germinated and we have received the fruitful result. Do pray for new believers and for us."

BMS works in partnership with SHED as the social arm of the Baptist Sangha.

Baptist House News

Welcome to

Paul Nicholson

Paul is now installed at BMS as the Systems Administrator. He has had ten years experience in computer systems development and management, and recently worked in Nepal as a BMS volunteer, setting up a computerised personnel system for the International Nepal Fellowship. Paul is a member of the New Baptist Church, Derby Street, Burton-on-Trent, coincidentally the same church as BMS President (1997/8) Martin Pearse belongs to.

Life in Retirement

Derek Mucklow

Derek Mucklow, former BMS Co-ordinator for London and the South East is now "retired" and living in Eastbourne. He says:"We are thoroughly enjoying our change of lifestyle and activity. Certainly the pace is somewhat slower, but there always seems so much we would like to do and never enough time to do it all. We are making lots of new friends, joining in several new ventures and, at the moment, 'filling pews' rather than pulpits! Even the car is pleased to exchange the North and South Circular roads and the M25 for Beachy Head and the South Downs. Christians never retire, and we are looking to the Lord to lead us into new paths of usefulness."

Relief Fund Update

Recent grants from the Relief Fund have been as follows:
£5,000 for food and medical aid in Batumi, Georgia
£5,000 for general food help in such places as Tajikistan, Azerbaijan and Chechnya
£2,000 for purchase of basic grains for families at Santa Helena, El Salvador where agricultural workers have lost between 50 and 75 per cent of their crops due to climatic conditions caused by the El Niño phenomenon. They have no means of repaying the funding given to them for seeds and fertilizers. Before they received financial help they did not have enough food for their families and had no seed to replant this year.

BMS Co-ordinators. Make sure you're updated!

Co-ordinator Manager - Phil Hindle

North Cath Mawson
49 Allerton Road, Bradford, BD8 0AY
Tel 01274 487341

Midlands Theo Lambourne
13 Briar Walk, Oadby, LE2 5UE
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South & South West Phil Hindle
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Scotland Derek Clark
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South Wales Gareth Hutchinson
20 Southward Lane, Langland, Swansea SA3 4QU
Tel 01792 360909

North Wales temporarily being covered by Cath Mawson and Gareth Hutchinson (Note new arrangement)

Don't forget your BMS Co-ordinator is there to:

- help you plan your church's world mission programme
- help you resource your church for mission awareness
- enable you to see how BMS is helping to make Jesus known all over the world and much, much more!

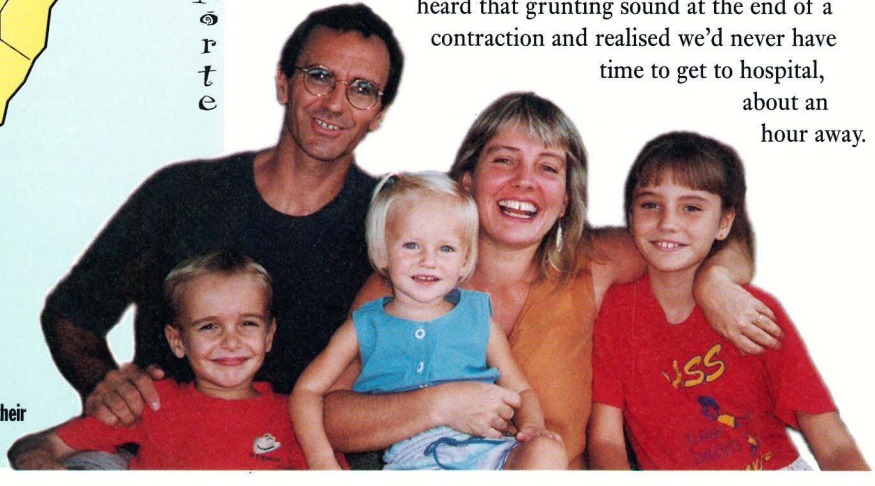
BMS News

NEW LIFE AT TRAPIA

DAVEEN WILSON IS SHOUTING WITH JOY

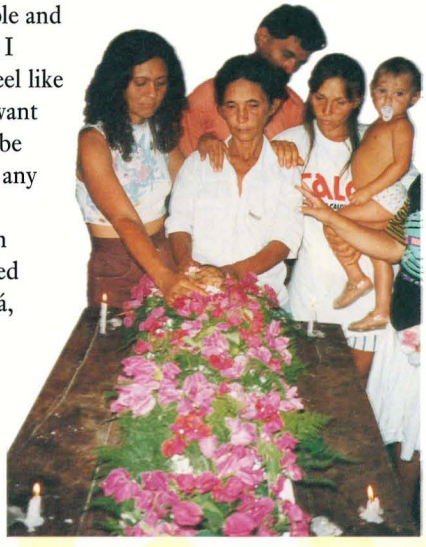
It was early in the morning when they came running to tell me that Nilcélia was having her baby. I walked down the road to her house – the other six children were milling about, half-excited, half-frightened, still tousled from sleep. When I got in the bedroom, just bigger than the ramshackle double bed where she was sitting, Nilcélia looked worried. "I want to go to hospital – I've been in labour too long and the baby isn't coming."

She should know I thought, but then I heard that grunting sound at the end of a contraction and realised we'd never have time to get to hospital, about an hour away.



Mike and Daveen Wilson with their children Debbie, Paul and Julia

I settled in to help and encourage her the best I could and in less than an hour, little Lucas Alexandre was born, a bit blue, but beautiful. I was trembling as much as Nilcélia, which made us all laugh but it isn't every day I help a baby be born, especially to one of my best friends. New life is exciting, in whatever form. It also feels at least a little frightening to be responsible for it – babies are so vulnerable and new and I always feel like I don't want them to be spoilt in any way.



When we arrived in Trapiá, most of these vulnerable new lives didn't make it to their first birth-day.

The women had lost confidence in their ability to breastfeed and were trying to raise their babies on bottles with watery powdered milk. At least three tins are needed per week but that would have taken the whole of what even the better off families earned in a week, so they got one tin, if it was a good week. No fridges, a hot climate, dirty water, flies covering the teats – I was surprised that any babies actually did make it though the few who did were far too small and many were mentally retarded.

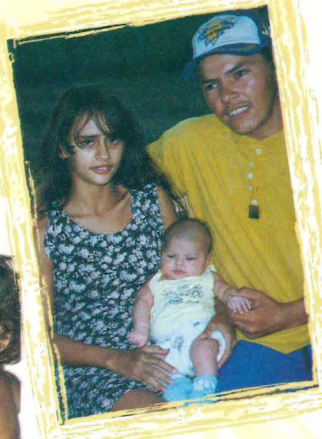
In the month that we lost our baby (in a miscarriage), little home–made coffins were passing our house every day on the way to the cemetery. We felt overwhelmed by death. The waste of it all made me angry and this anger motivated me into an all-out campaign for breastfeeding. One mother, who had lost 14 babies, moved in with us along with the drunkard father and skinny only surviving son. For 40 days I got up every time that baby cried (and it was often!) and cajoled the mum into trying. By the end she was convinced and others were impressed enough to start giving it a go.

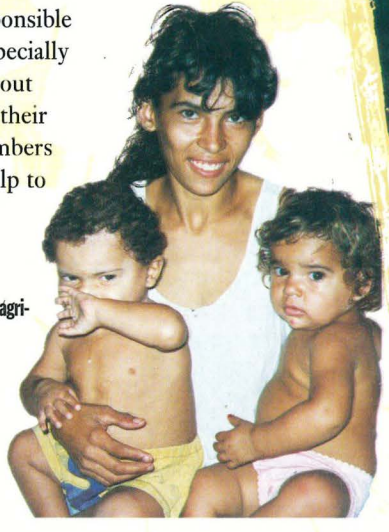
It seemed like God was helping to prove a point. Every mother who tried breastfeeding produced a ridiculously fat, healthy baby. My malnourished little neighbour, Irene, had a baby boy at the same time that our son Paul was born but her baby was always bigger and heavier than mine. It got to the point where you wondered how she had the strength to lug him about, and people started calling him "Irene's calf".

There were discouragements, especially when a mum that I felt sure was convinced would start giving a bottle and the baby would die before I knew she'd given up. Then, one day about two years ago, when we started counting up which mothers were breastfeeding, we suddenly realised that the fashion has surely changed and that the death of a baby is now a rare event in Trapiá – hallelujah!

New life is exciting in the spiritual realm as well and we waited almost eight years to see our first re-birth here, so that made it even more special. His name was Tontonho and in the year since then, we've seen more than a hundred new births. It's exciting but it's also a little frightening to feel responsible for so many valuable new lives, especially when we know we have an enemy out there, only too willing to mess up their new lives. Pray for these new members of your family and for us as we help to make them strong. ●

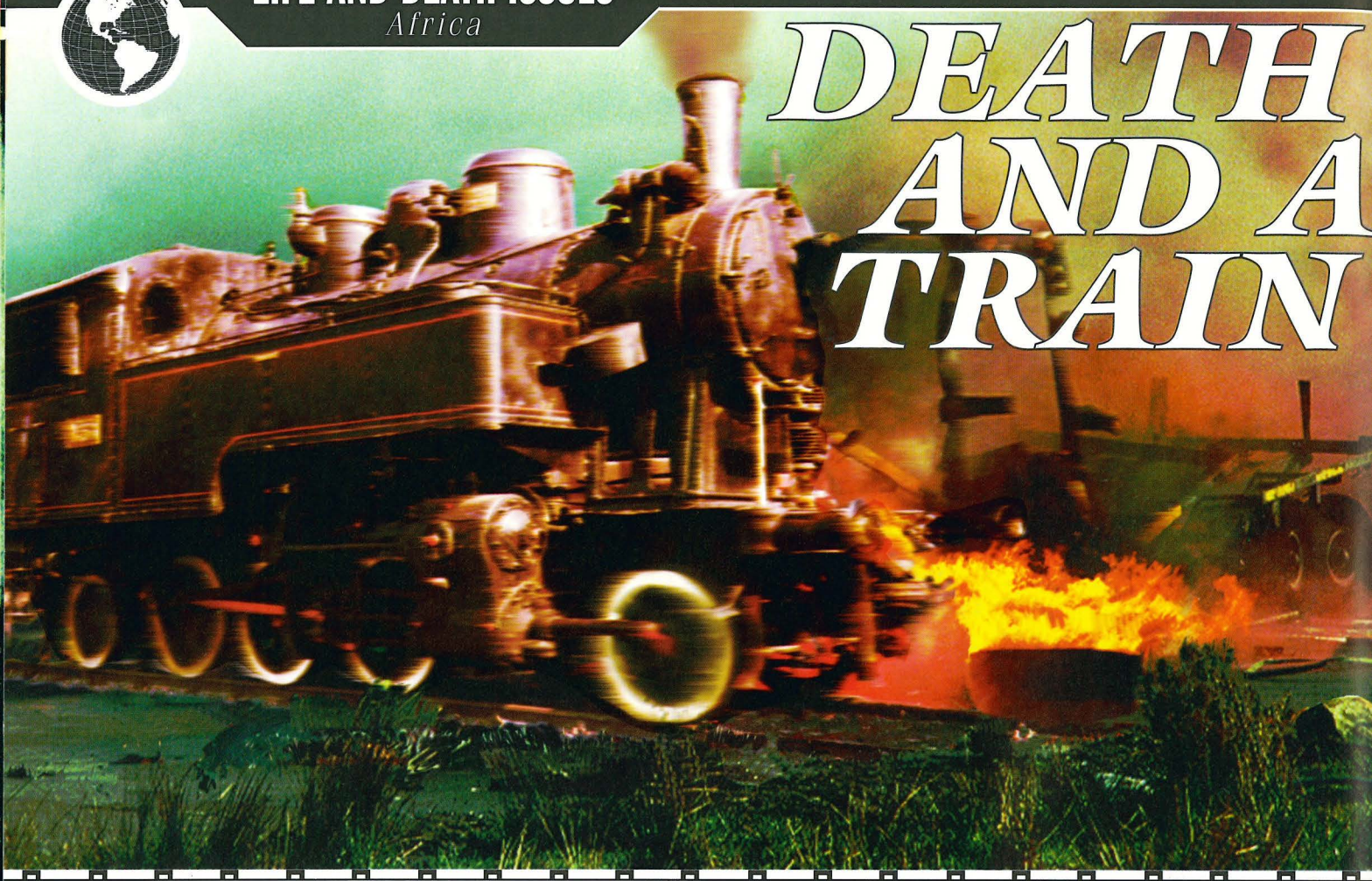
Every mother who tried breastfeeding produced a ridiculously fat, healthy baby.





Daveen Wilson works with her husband Michael in agricultural and development work in Rio Grande do Norte, Brazil.

DEATH AND A TRAIN



PHIL IGOE REFLECTS ON THE VALUE OF LIFE IN ZIMBABWE

Leaving one of the townships, my heart sank to see a low-loader stuck on the raised railway crossing. It was clear that the tractor, roped into service, was not going to be able to pull it off.

I turned my vehicle around to find an alternative crossing when I spotted the train rounding the corner. The frantic waving by the men on the stranded lorry was met with a blast from the train's horn. The lorry was quickly evacuated when it became clear that the train wasn't going to stop in time, and the resulting smash was spectacular. The lorry was completely wrecked, as were the overhead power lines bringing the main Harare to Bulawayo rail line to a standstill.

Once it was clear that all those in and around the lorry were clear we drove up alongside the train to check the driver had survived the impact. There was no need to worry. The train was almost unscathed, and the driver, seemed to have enjoyed the experience.

> "The train was not going to stop in time..."

Whilst waiting for the police to arrive I was speaking to the driver of the train, and asked him why he didn't stop. He told me that he had applied the usual brakes, but not the emergency ones. To have done so, he said, would have caused a de-railment, and would have done significant damage to the rolling stock and the railway lines. I asked whether he knew that everyone from the lorry was clear. The driver responded that he thought they all had, but even if they hadn't, it wouldn't have made any difference.

As I made my way home later that afternoon I reflected upon the value of life. In a country where death is much more a way of life than in the West, the value of life can seem, at times, to be less highly valued. Where infant mortality is higher, and life expectancy is lower that "at home", and from the effects of an increasingly AIDS-ravaged society, it is easy to draw conclusions that people are less highly valued. However respect is placed on older members of society within the extended family network, and when I think of the, often institution-alised, abuse we place upon the weak and vulnerable in our society, who are we to judge?

Phil Igoe works for the BMS in Zimbabwe.

DEREK RUMBOL RELATES HOW THERE WAS NO MYSTERY ABOUT THIS DEATH!

I don't know if you can imagine what would happen if someone died on an Intercity train in this country, but my guess is it would probably be hushed up, and the body would be taken off the train very quietly and efficiently. Most people would not be aware anything out of the ordinary had happened.

A couple of years ago I was travelling on the Matadi Kinshasa Express with Brenda, my wife, on the way back from Matadi. In fact the Express train was one of the good things in what was then Zaire in that it actually did work. We heard an announcement over the intercom: a request for a doctor. A little later there was another announcement: somebody had died.

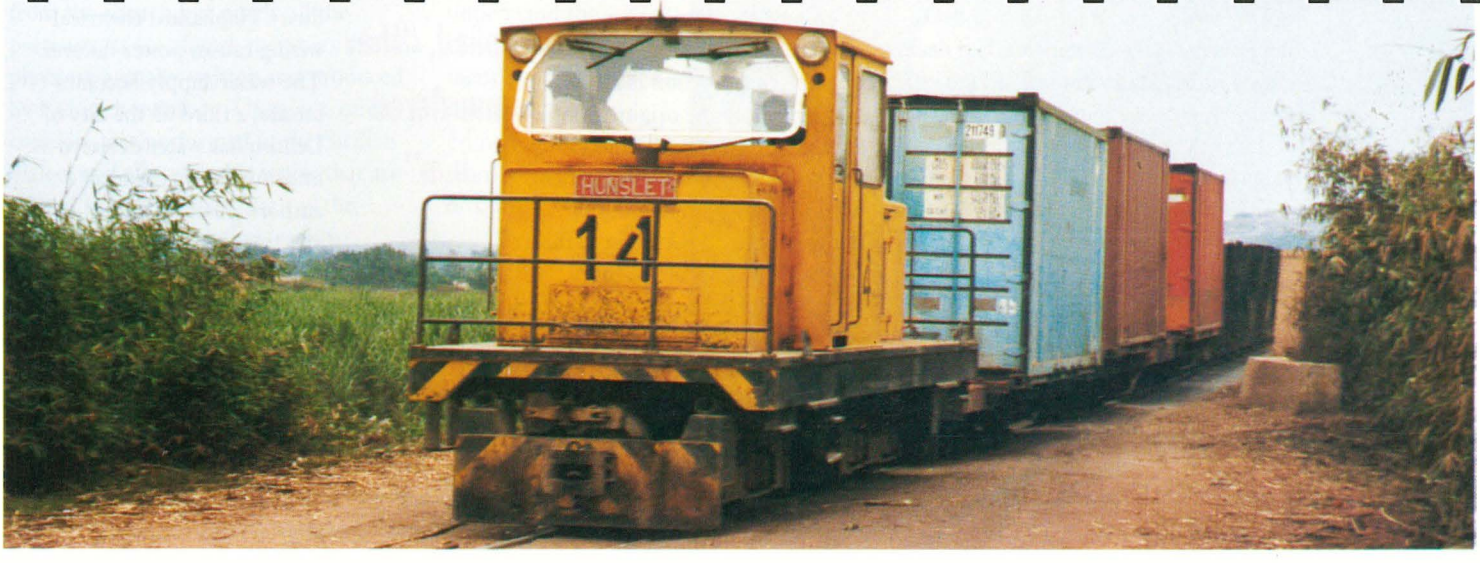
Then we saw people coming through, obviously evacuating a carriage, leaving the corpse alone there with a relative or friend.

The next thing we knew was that a sermon was being broadcast over the intercom; they'd obviously located a pastor on board! And there was music too - including Christian songs. Finally, in the true spirit of African solidarity they announced that an offering would be made for the deceased family. One of the train's hostesses, more normally used to selling drinks, came through with a plastic bag collecting money and we heard, again on the intercom, that the sum of over 14,500,000 zaires had been collected, which then was roughly £100. That was an extremely generous offering in that situation.

We heard the intercom for the last time thanking the people again for the expression of African solidarity at the time of death. I remember thinking at the time: what an interesting contrast with what we would imagine would happen in this country! Which do you think is more appropriate?

Derek Rumbol is the former BMS Regional Representative for Africa. He has now retired and lives in Nottinghamshire.

"a little later there was another announcement: someone had died..."



LIVING WITH TH

CHRIS MATTOCK TELLS OF LIFE IN SICILY

In the beautiful historic centre there are bombed out shells of medieval palaces but not from some recent terrorist campaign for Sicilian independence. Palermo is still affected by the Allied Forces defeat of the Italian army in World War Two. From the roof terrace of the Palazzo Chiaramonte in the centre of Palermo I looked into the ruin of other 13th century Gothic palace nearby, and saw abandoned 60s style cars rusting amongst hand-crafted Gothic masonry fallen from the bomb damaged roof. When Franco Zefferelli wanted to film a scene of 1940s Italian urban decay a few years ago, he went to Palermo because there was no need to build a set.

The city is ringed and dominated by huge complexes of six storey apartment buildings constructed without regulation or planning permission. They are inhuman, costly and ugly. The guidebooks call it the sack of Palermo. Once described as a jewel of the Mediterranean, the city has been overwhelmed by the Mafia who control the construction industry and stole the money sent from Rome for post war reconstruction. I mention Palermo because it is so well known, but to a lesser extent the same effects can be seen all over Sicily. Lentini and Catania are no exceptions. Of course the traditional types of organised criminal activities, theft, prostitution, drug dealing, the protection racket and usury have not stopped. The other day at Lentini cemetery a lady showed me her husband and son's tomb. The inscription showed the son died age 30, six years ago and I asked if he had died of an illness. "No" the mother replied, "they murdered him". Her sister explained that he had seen 'them' do something so 'they' tied his hands and feet and threw him in a tank of water. He left a wife and three young daughters. More victims of an unseen organisation.

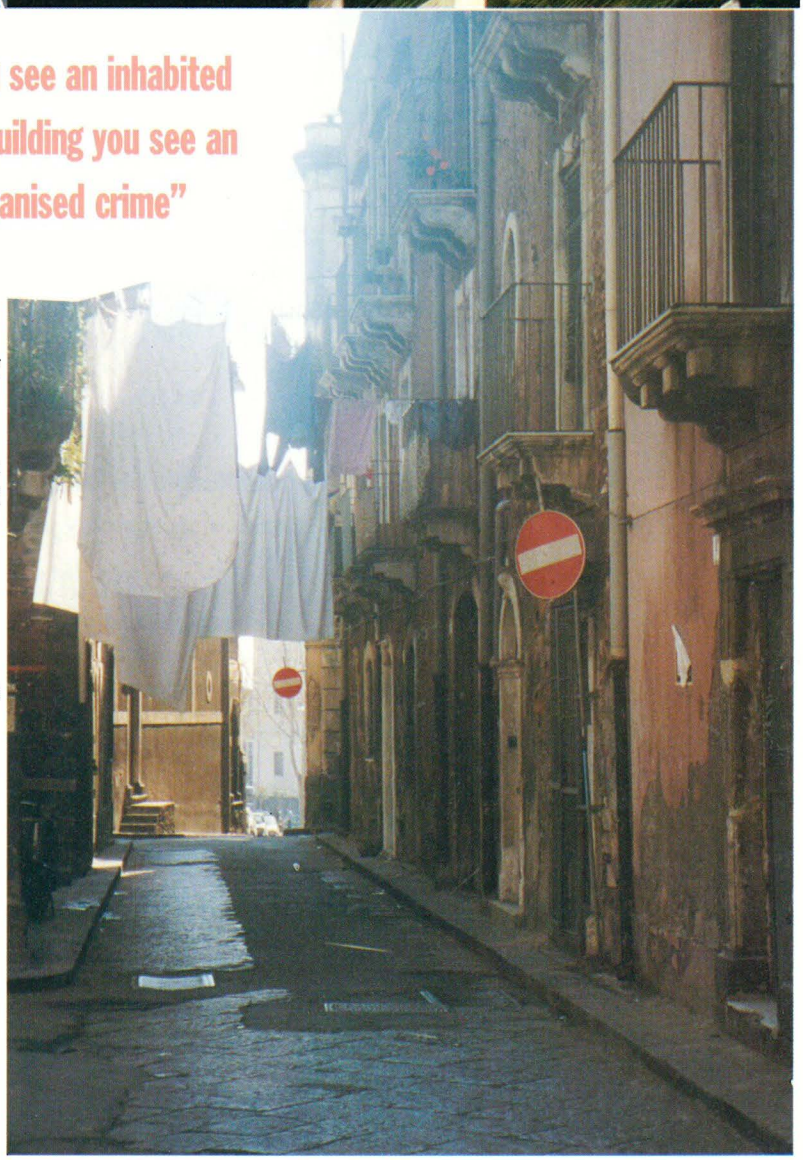
The biggest money, however, is in the construction industry, making use of the original Mafia skill, rent collecting. Forget ideas of well dressed young men carrying guns jumping out of big black cars. Look again at the postcard pictures of quaint Mediterranean streets and see the littered and weedy gutters, damp walls, peeling plaster and straggling electric wires. But don't just look at the old streets and buildings; every time you see an inhabited but unfinished building you see an effect of organised crime. Planning regulations are so complex and difficult to apply that it seems in everyone's interest to ignore them and get on with building. Doesn't every one need roads, houses, jobs and a share in the money to be taken or earned? But the law doesn't protect those who live in buildings constructed without planning permission; accepting taxes from apartments built without permission would be to accept their existence and admit a crime has been committed. It is in everyone's interest to admit to nothing. But then the council has no money to collect the rubbish when local taxes are not paid; roads built without approval are never swept or maintained and often remain unsurfaced, muddy and dusty. Haphazard electrical wiring causes power failures. The water supply becomes unsafe; a third of the city of Lentini has water declared undrinkable by the local authority. Poorly built apartments collapse when there's an earthquake and reconstruction takes years. Lentini still has 300 families living in container houses, seven years after the last big earthquake.

> "No" the mother replied, "they murdered him"

How do churches live with the Mafia? Mostly they do what everybody else does, live with the effects of organised crime, stay out of any direct anti-Mafia involvement preferring to support

individual members should the need arise. However as part of the national response against the murder of the anti-Mafia judge Falcone in 1991 Lentini Baptist Church created a centre for documentation of the problems of Southern Italy (centro di documentazione sui problemi del Mezzogiorno). It has a small but comprehensive archive on subjects such as immigration, pollution, unemployment and of course the Mafia, and gives office space to a monthly alternative newspaper "Giro di Vita". (If you are connected to the Internet you can find the paper's home page at http://www.sertel.it/girodivita/index.htm). The centre also has an amateur theatre company. This is independent from the church but nearly all the participants are church members and the plays are actually written and produced by a church member. The plays, often comedies are performed in the Sicilian dialect and always tackle issues that are related to life in Sicily; such as the problems of immigration, racism, sexism, unemployment, the cost of dying, the Mafia. The intention of the theatre company, is through entertainment, to demonstrate the gospel in action, by speaking for the oppressed, poor and marginalised of society. While it is true that the centre was founded at a time of national anti-Mafia protest, it is not directly anti-Mafia. The aim of the centre is to provide a voice and point of reference for victims of the problems of southern Italy. This involves activites which help victims of any and all aspects of contemporary society, and attempts to understand the complexites behind many problems. This is not to be 'soft' on crime but maybe to be 'harder' on the causes of crime. ●

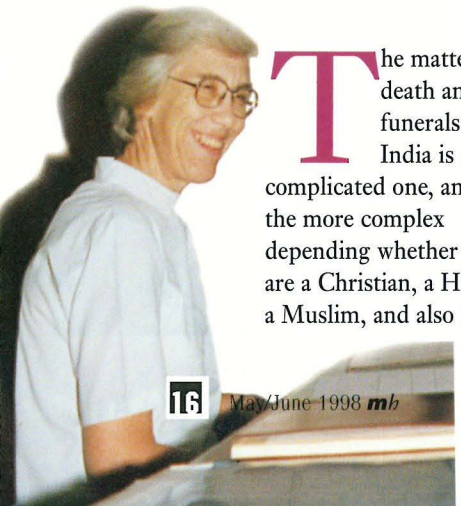
"Every time you see an inhabited but unfinished building you see an effect of organised crime"



Chris Mattock, along with his wife Sarah, works for the BMS in Sicily

COPING WITH DEATH IN INDIA

ANN BOTHAMLEY TELLS OF DIFFERENT WAYS OF COPING WITH DEATH IN INDIA



The matter of death and funerals in India is quite a complicated one, and all the more complex depending whether you are a Christian, a Hindu or a Muslim, and also to which strata of society you belong.

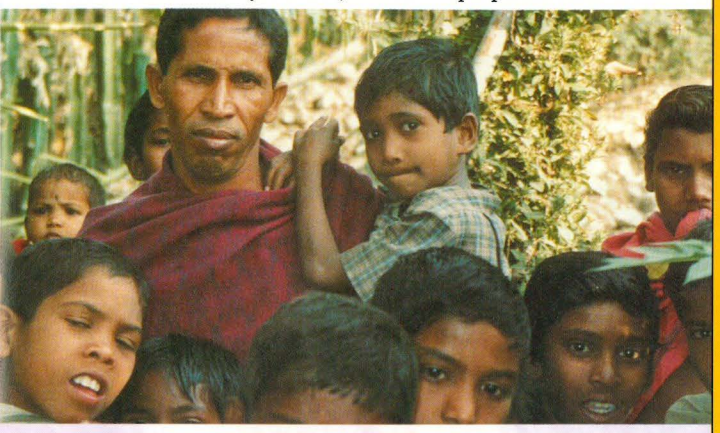
For Christians there is an obvious hope amidst the sadness that the person has gone to be with the Lord. The body will remain in the home for some time after death, "lying in state" as it were, with family members and friends visiting the house, and singing hymns around the body. For the funeral itself the body will be taken in an open coffin to the church, often in a van or a bullock cart.

After the service everyone will come and walk round the body, sometimes laying flowers or wreaths. From the church the procession will go to the cemetery, where another short service will take place – Christians are always buried. After ten days of mourning there may be a thanksgiving service, and a shared meal with other members of the community.

For the Hindu in India, death is always accompanied by the expression of grief in a very emotional way, with both men and women wailing and crying. There is no acceptance of the death, as there is no future to look forward to, but only the fact that they will never see that person again. In

the village setting the body may be kept out in the middle of the village street, perhaps under a canopy with blocks of ice around, where available, to preserve the body from the heat. The person will be dressed in their best clothes, often surrounded by flowers, and again people will come and visit the family, walk around the body, stay for some time and then leave. The body will then be placed on a bier in a sitting position, surrounded by garlands of flowers. The men will then carry the body, preceded by drums and sometimes a band, down to the riverside. All along the way people will let off crackers - a kind of firework which makes a loud explosion. This is to frighten away the evil spirits. At the burning ghat the body will be placed on a specially constructed funeral pyre. The Hindu priest will conduct a special pooja prior to the burning. This will involve incantations, the pouring of oil and sometimes other substances. If it is a man who has died, the eldest son will usually be responsible for setting fire to the wood. His widow will be dressed in her finest clothes and jewellery, with flowers in her hair. This will then all be stripped off and she will be dressed in white. Thereafter many Hindus will never wear flowers or jewellery again.

For Muslims death brings a sense of resignation because "this is the will of Allah". So there will not be the emotional outburst of grief such as one sees with Hindus. The body will be prepared with three white cotton cloths, and will remain in the family home for some time. People will come, sit and pray and just be with the family. At the time of the funeral the men will go to the mosque and bring back an open-sided bier that is kept there especially for people who have died. The body will be placed in this and carried back to the mosque. No women are allowed to be present once the body has left the home. Special prayers will be said at the mosque by the mullah before the body is taken for burial. A coffin is never used. If it is the husband who has died, the wife will be kept in seclusion for 40 days and will not be allowed to see any other men - the women of the household look after her. At the end of the 40 days the household has a feast. This is seen as the end of mourning, but the anniversary of the death will be remembered with prayers being said at the mosque every year. ●



"...death and funerals in India are complicated"

Mike Pilavachi

Children of a merciful Father

I was watching Newsnight last evening and was very interested in a discussion that was going on. Jeremy Paxman was interviewing a film producer who was in the process of making a programme involving a real death scene. The discussion centred on the question of whether the filming of a live death scene was really good taste. At first the producer seemed to be making a good defence for his case. "Death is the final taboo," he said. "There is nothing wrong with dying a dignified death. We need to be able to see just how normal the process of dying really is."

Then, as the conversation went on, we viewers began to see a hidden agenda. Apparently a film had recently been shown of a 'mercy killing' in Holland which was supposedly very therapeutic. 'Mercy killing' – such a clever phrase that it almost sounds nice! What we are doing is pushing back the boundaries of what is acceptable. Under the guise of showing a beautiful death, came the undermining of the preciousness of life.

Mercy is ultimately an attribute of God. He is 'kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful' (Luke 6:35,36). To take an attribute of God and to link it to euthanasia is not only to deny God; it is also to play God. Every time in human history we have tried in our arrogance to take God's place the result has been a disaster.

As Christians we know that there is no fear in death and that it is certainly not a subject to be avoided. The sanctity of death, however, is inexplicably linked to the sanctity of life. Jesus overcame death on the cross and we must live this mortal life in the light of eternity. ●

Mike Pilavachi heads up the Soul Survivor team and pastors a congregation in Watford specially aimed at reaching young people.

Ann Bothamley is a nurse with the BMS working in the CMC Hospital, Vellore, India.

An adventure in faith

An adventure in faith

THEY SAY "LIFE BEGINS AT 40" BUT **SEAN CARTER** ALREADY HAS A LIFETIME OF EXPERIENCE AT THE AGE OF 29. **SAM GIBSON** REPORTS HOW THIS YOUNG MAN'S LIFE IS SHAPING UP TO BE A REAL ADVENTURE IN FAITH

Sean began his Christian life in his early 20s as a travelling evangelist and itinerant preacher.

He applied to South London Bible School, Clapham thinking a Bible school qualification would aid his developing ministry - but an invitation to preach at a church whose minister turned out to be the school principal led to Sean being asked to join the school as a teacher! He has taught at the school for the past six years and still has not managed to gain his qualification!

In the midst of this, Sean felt called to the pastorate, "for a season". He came across Rural Ministries which concentrates in supporting village churches. Clipston is not one of its churches but they had approached Rural Ministries looking for a young pastor. The match felt right and in March 1994, Sean became pastor of a tiny elderly congregation of nine members.

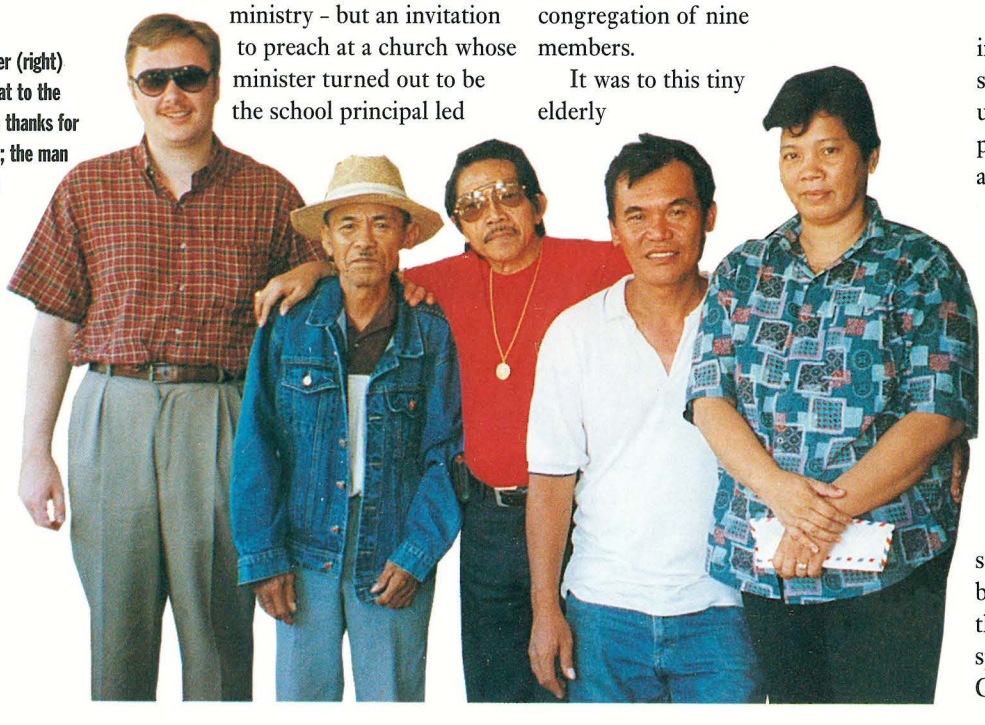
It was to this tiny elderly congregation that a few weeks after joining, Sean in faith gave what he believed was a word of prophecy that God would use the church again to take the gospel to the nations. It was at Clipston in 1791 that John Sutcliffe and Andrew Fuller preached on the need for world mission and the young William Carey was so fired up that he decided to begin his own ministry – later to become BMS.

Sean in faith gave what he believed was a word of prophecy that God would use the church again to take the gospel to the nations

The initial sign was when Sky TV cameras and crew set up in the chapel to film "Thought for the Day" for broadcast on Christian Channel Europe. The church felt it was an initial sign that God could place this small village on the international map. The local media showed an interest and guest speakers, unaware of the church's vision, also prophesied that people would come from a wide area to the church.

Sean has questioned the Lord as to whether more could be achieved through a large church in a city, but it seems God wants to deal with small numbers. He says, "We feel like Gideon's army" although numbers are slowly rising – currently 19 members plus children and visitors, with new Christians being added through the church's outreach.

Two years ago Sean felt the Lord saying that now was the time he would begin travelling overseas. A burden for the Philippines led to an invitation to speak at a national conference held by the Christian Church Fellowship



Sean Carter (right) gave his hat to the old man in thanks for hospitality; the man loved hats

An adventure in faith

International (CCFI) – a denomination in the Philippines.

After his first meeting with General Bishop Pat Hermosillia, leader of CCFI, Pat asked Sean to stay in the Philippines to work with CCFI, but Sean felt God wanted him in the UK. The next morning Pat said, "I believe the Holy Spirit has just whispered in my ear that you are a man worthy of becoming a bishop in our organisation". There was an ordination service that weekend and Sean was made an International Bishop with responsibility to oversee Filipino churches and small groups in the UK and Europe. The church was surprised when he came home!

His ordination has opened up the Philippines to Sean as CCFI has churches all over the country at which he can now minister freely. Other denominations in the Philippines and other countries also accept him more readily and are happy to allow him to work with them in leading evangelistic missions. He will be running short missions in Jamaica, Malaysia and Korea this year.

While visiting the Philippines Sean also attended a meeting between the government and church leaders when the Christian President Ramus shared his vision to build his nation on God's word and according to biblical principles; he also met Immelda (Meldy), the woman who was to become his wife. Now happily married she is expecting their first baby.

During this period Sean began a ministry called Counties for Christ. The original vision was to print a gospel booklet and distribute it to every household in Northamptonshire, following up with missions and working with the local churches. Sean's missions overseas are also a part of this growing ministry. Currently it is involved in training local churches in evangelism (with a view to raising up future overseas workers), and raising money for overseas social projects.

In all his work throughout the UK and overseas, Sean's aim is to offer his services to the churches already doing the work. Unity is the word at the centre of his varied ministry with his motive to see God's Kingdom grow across denominations. "Doctrine," he says, "can be a stumbling block. So long as the fundamentals are the same and someone is my brother in Christ, the rest is secondary."

Where the Lord will lead Sean, Meldy and Clipston now is anyone's guess – but it will certainly be an adventure!

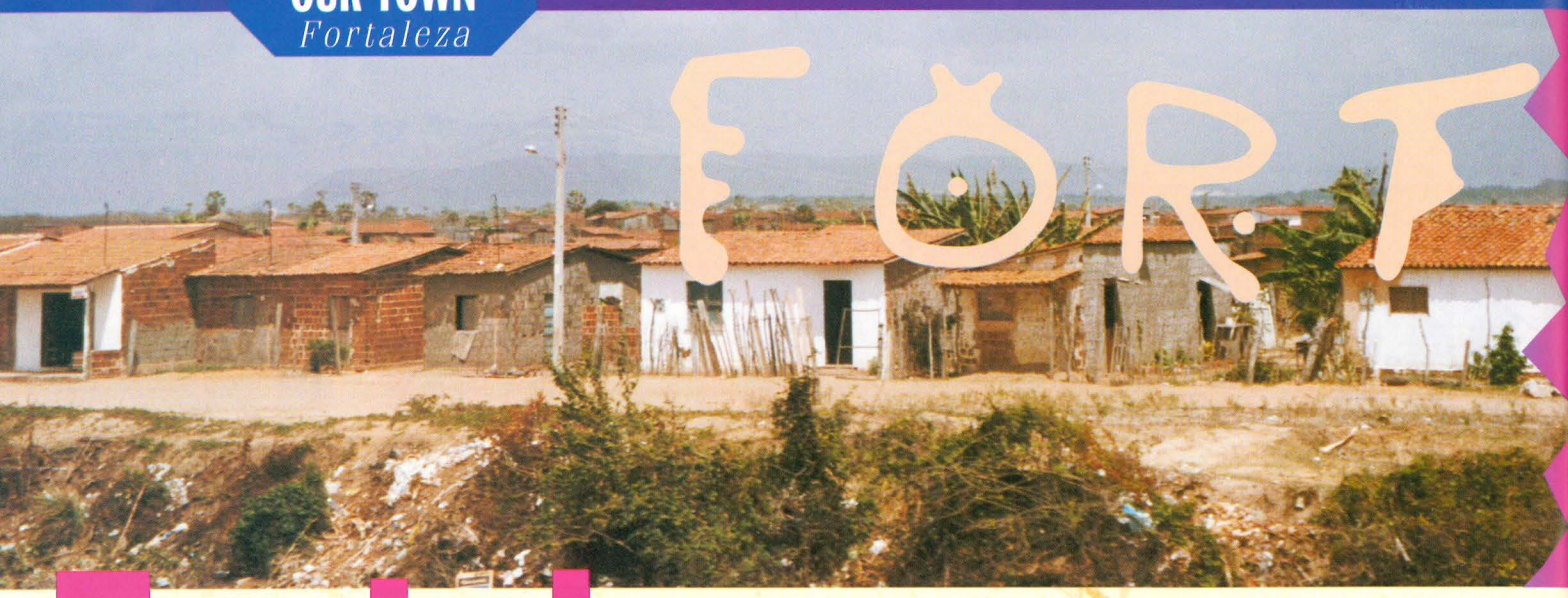
Top: Sean Carter and interpreter Bishop Metayo in Lete province.

Sean Carter with ministers at a Christian Church Fellowship International conference

Right: Immelda Carter

Above: President Ramus of the Philippines (front centre) with church leaders

in faith



Fortaleza

A SERIES EDITED BY **JAN KENDALL** THAT LOOKS AT TOWNS AND CITIES AROUND THE WORLD WHERE BMS PERSONNEL ARE WORKING

BY **JOHN & NORMA CLARK, ANDY & LINDA EAVES, MARK & SUZANA GREENWOOD & ALEX FROST**

INTRODUCTION

As the plane passes over groups of Tapeba Indian houses among mangroves on the banks of the Ceará river a million tiny light bulbs fill the darkness below you, picking out small houses scattered like lego pieces on the outskirts of town. Beyond the runway smart apartment blocks and broadcast towers litter the Atlantic coastline, jockeying for position with five star hotels and shining shopping centres.

Our Town

The Railway Favela, where Andy and Linda Eaves work

ALEZA

It is said that, in world terms, Brazil has one of the most uneven distributions of wealth. It is a very rich country, with very few wealthy people and millions of underprivileged. They also say that within Brazil Fortaleza is one of the cities in this league. Four years ago a report said that 60 per cent of the city's population were living in houses built on invaded land, without planning permission. Statistics can be unreliable; observing transport in Fortaleza helps to give credibility to the figures; while sleek, new models of imported cars fill up at the pump, the bus terminals teem with crowds of people squeezing on to the stuffy vehicles of an overburdened public transport system. The population is roughly 2,200,000. Two million passengers pass through the bus turnstiles each day.

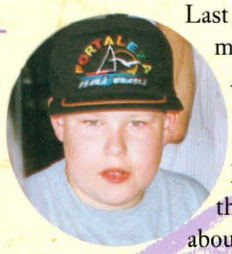
RICH AND POOR

Fortaleza has a sort of oblong shape. The top right hand corner is a microcosm of the technological advances of the nineties: Leisuredromes and the Internet, private health clinics of Swiss standards, cable television and cash tills which give immediate access to bank accounts in any country of the world, providing you are armed with your plastic and PIN. Together with a beautifully maintained esplanade, pier and restaurants along the front this Fortaleza is an ideal place for the rich to live or play.

The other three quarters fight to keep up. Some suburbs admirably reflect the lifestyle of the rich, with their own mini shopping centres, private schools and well-kept banks, but most work hard, earn little and just about survive on overstretched public services suffering from poor administration or lack of adequate funding. Myriads of scruffy corner shops and informal butchers keep the locals fed and thousands of falling down builders' yards ply an unending trade to the families arriving from the interior or investing in "home improvements". Everyone, it seems, is an amateur building expert, and little regard is paid to planning permission or even, in some cases, to whom the land may belong. When you are fighting for a place in life getting by comes first and rules afterwards.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

by Alex Frost (aged 11)



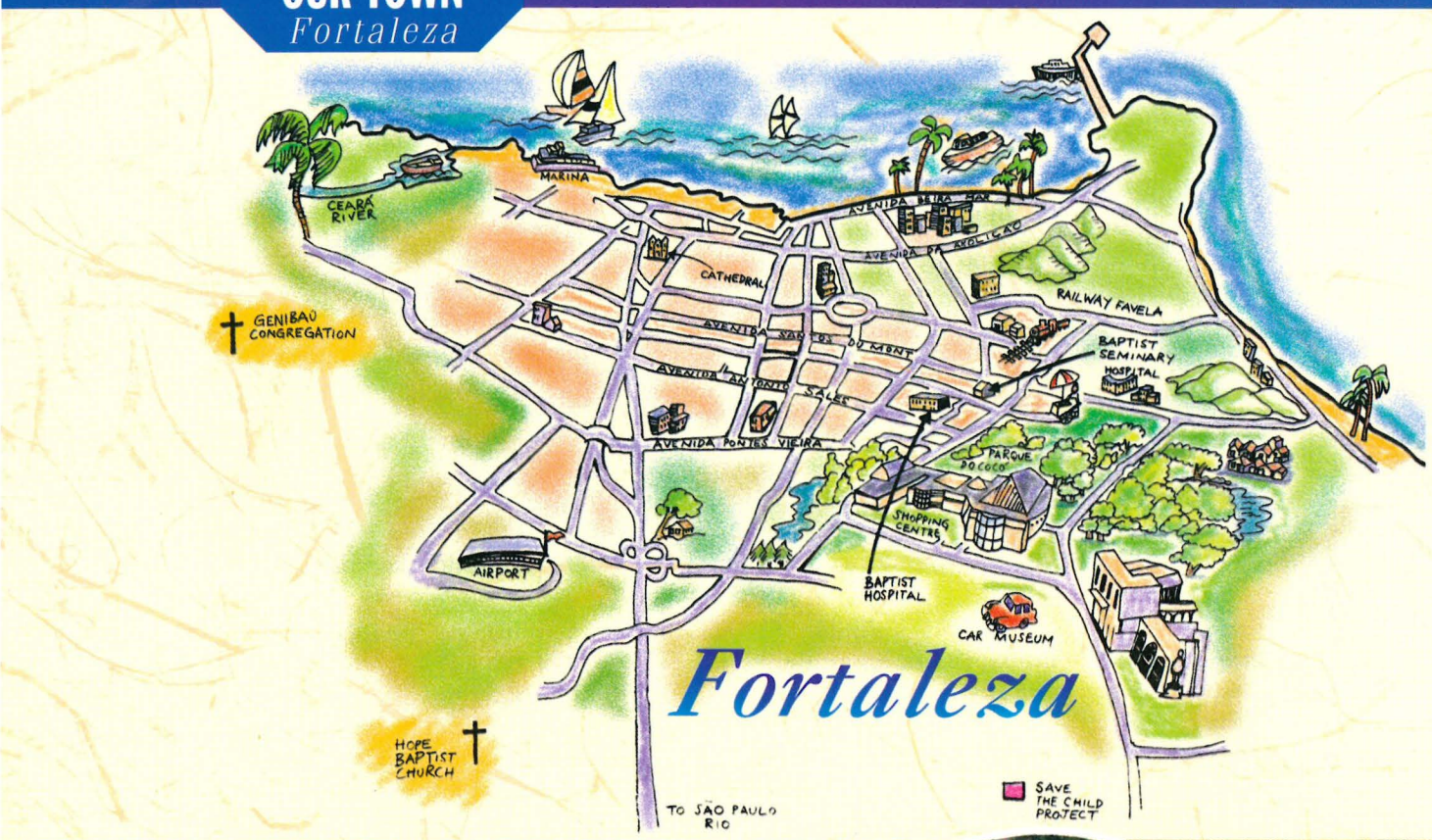
Last July I went to visit my uncle Mark, Auntie Suzana and my new cousin Edward who live in Fortaleza. The things I remember about Fortaleza are:

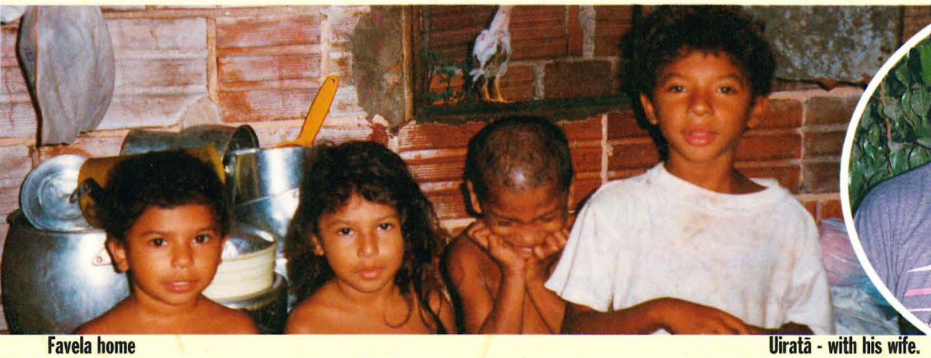
- lots of trash on the road
- it didn't smell that nice
- children had lots of kites
- people looked happy but poor
- home-made toys
- not everyone had gardens
- sometimes people did not have clean clothes
- they only wear flip-flops on their feet, if anything
- scorching hot, lots of sun, never cloudy
- always went dark at 6.00 pm
- roads very bumpy
- people do not wear seat-belts
- not as many cars as in England
- People speak a different language *(Portuguese)*
- they use their hands a lot when speaking
- different food in the shops - they have more fruit as compared to our chocolates, sweets and crisps
- my favourite meal was one breakfast when we had savoury cake, other cake, crispy balls, tapioca and special bread.

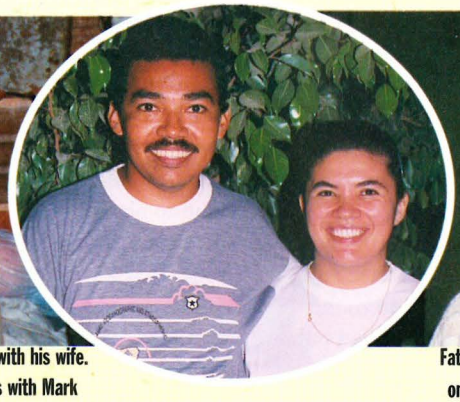
PEOPLE AND ATMOSPHERE

Fortaleza is scruffy yet beautiful. Gaudy, plastic shop fronts in the centre are interspersed with intricately painted, striking, colonial style buildings. Most suburbs attempt some sort of outdoor leisure area with greens and five-a-side football pitches. The people, perhaps, are the most colourful aspect, bringing humour, music, industry and initiative despite the struggles and tragedies.

Children's programme in church Holiday Bible Club




Favela home


Uirata - with his wife. He works with Mark Greenwood in the Genibau favela

Fatima - works with Mary Parsons on the Save the Child project

Mainly a mix of Indigenous and European blood, with African influences, Ceará adds its own style to the Brazilian look. Stifling heat does nothing to dampen the spirits. Noise is all around, emanating from corner bars, open-air restaurants, in-car public stereos and loud, evangelical preachers in numerous tiny chapels.

FOOD

One cannot write about Ceará without talk of food: Tapioca bread made of manioc flour, garnished with coconut milk; Baião de dois (mixed rice and beans) accompanied by sun-dried beef; Rapa dura (hard sugar cake) washed down with lashings of fizzy cashew fruit drink; Couscous and fried egg; all finished off with unimaginable tropical fruit ice creams and sweet coffee make it a great place to eat.

RELIGIOUS LIFE

Fortaleza's two million inhabitants reflect the varied spiritual spectrum of Brazil. They are very religious. A recent survey showed over 90 per cent believed in God. The vast majority of the population are nominally Roman Catholics. However behind that label lies another reality. Brazilian catholicism is highly syncretistic, absorbing into itself contradictory elements.

Spiritism is the unofficial religion of the vast majority of Brazilian Catholics. They believe in reincarnation, mediums and have mixed the belief in spirits with traditional beliefs in saints to an extent that it makes it difficult to distinguish between them. Many Catholics will happily go to a spiritist session in the week and mass on Sunday. The historic shortage of Catholic priests and the vast distances within Brazil have meant that the majority of Catholics have grown up with little or no understanding of their faith. Spiritism is divided into many groups and is not to be seen as an organised religion.

Traditional Catholicism is very strong here with two of Brazil's largest pilgrimage centres near to Fortaleza. Roman Catholic charismatic groups are growing fast. They have meetings with 140,000 present in a local stadium.

There is little discrimination between Evangelicals, Pentecostals, and sects by society on the whole. They are all labelled as "crentes"(believers).

PROFILE - RAIMUNDO

Raimundo, a civil servant, worked in a country town. After drink had led to drunken brawls, knife fights and several days spent in police custody he moved with his family to Fortaleza to make a new start. He brought his problem with him.

One Christmas he did what he had never done before and hit his wife and children. It was the last straw for Sanya and she went back to her parent's farm. Desperate, Raimundo sought help at the aptly named Hope Baptist Church. There he accepted Christ as Lord and Saviour. His life was transformed. Six months later Sanya returned with the children. The family are now active in starting a new work on a poor housing estate.

KINGDOM RESOURCES

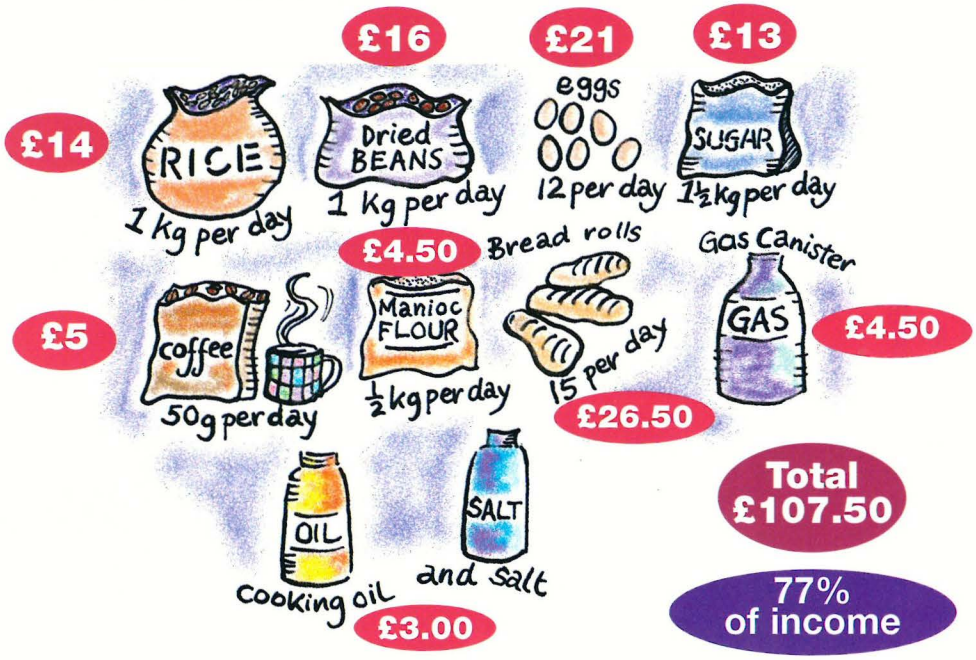
The Baptist Seminary in Fortaleza sees itself as a resource for training at all levels. There are basic courses for Sunday School teachers, preachers, administrators and musicians. Next year an extension course is planned that will take training to the isolated churches in the interior.

At a higher level there is the degree course in theology with options in missiology, biblical exegesis and religious education. Soon to start will be a new venture - a master's degree in theology using the Internet. It is hoped that this course will serve not only Ceará, but Portuguese speakers throughout the world. ●

COST OF LIVING

Fátima is 42, lives in the local favela and shares two small rooms with her five children, her granddaughter, mother, sister, two nephews, a great-nephew, a clutch of chickens and two dogs. The six adults and six children have a total income of about £180 a month comprising two state pensions and a little extra from odd cleaning and ironing jobs.

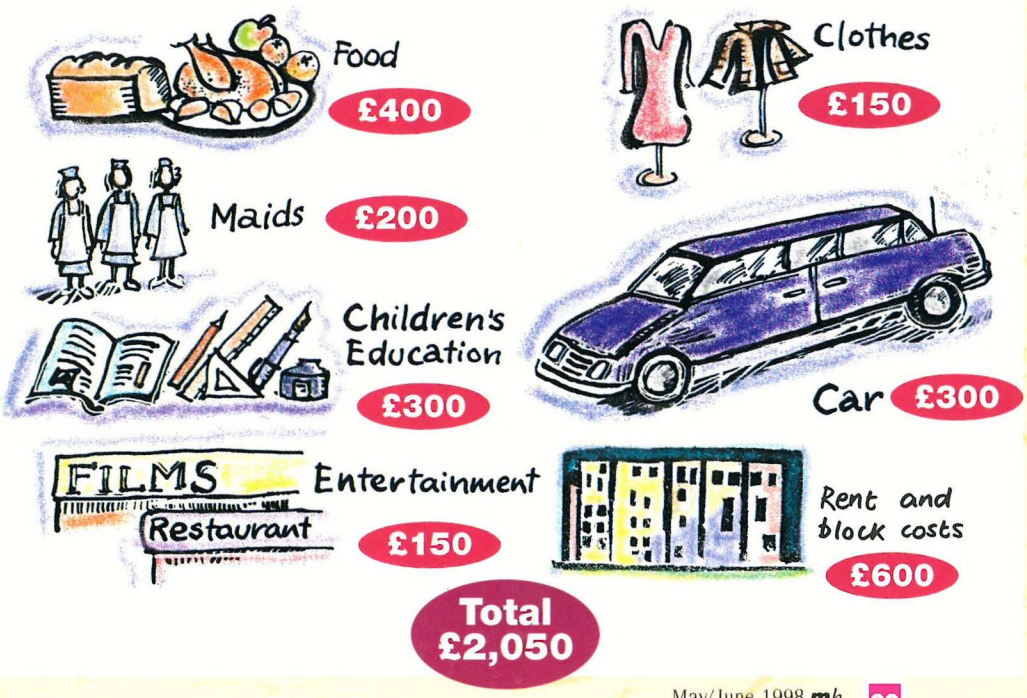
This is their basic shopping list each month:



The family buys everything from their corner shop as there they can have credit up to the value of the pensions. When the money arrives they have no choice but to hand it all over to the shop-keeper to clear the month's debt; and the process continues. Fátima wants to shop at the local supermarket where she would get more for her money but how can she?

Overlooking Fátima's favela are many high-rise apartment blocks, which are home to the middle class. A typical family is made up of two working parents, two children, three maids - one of whom "lives in", and two cars. Their total income would be around £2,500 a month.

Their monthly spending would be something like this:



The Democratic Republic of CONGO

Gilbert and his mud hut, Bwantaba, Bateke plateau

Six weeks doesn't sound a long jail sentence as these things go. Long enough, said Gilbert, who got home from Kinshasa's Makala prison with two others the night we arrived at Bwantaba. We were lodged in his mud hut. A member of the chief's family, he'd have no difficulty finding somewhere else to sleep, they said. Judging by the rejoicing and prolonged chatter that broke out in the middle of the night, they may not have slept anyway.

A week or two after the Kabila takeover we had learnt that the new military based at Mbankana had been raiding nearby cattle farms. Only when Pastor Mbieme came to Kinshasa however, did we learn that Bwantaba young men, church members included, had been involved. Their families had eaten well for a few days.

"What action has the church taken?" we asked. Pastor Mbieme looked perplexed. "If we put them out of membership there won't be any church left," he said. "They're not showing up anyway and it's mainly women and children on a Sunday." Prospects for church growth at Bwantaba looked decidedly gloomy.

Such raids on the part of the military in fact precipitated their departure, once the victims' complaints reached the authorities in Kinshasa. For a time there were no forces of law and order at all on that part of the plateau.

Then, in October, 15 of the new police arrived at Mbankana under a commandant and began to make their presence felt. All hunters' guns must be registered, the villages cleaned up, every hut have an outside toilet and all children be in school. Fine, if there were the schools.

"Mysteriously, it transpired no-one would admit to having brought the charges."

A month later Pastor Mbieme brought us up to date. Someone had lodged a complaint with the Mbankana authorities against the young men of Bwantaba, who had stolen cattle. Police had arrived in the village to arrest them, whereupon most had fled to the forest. Only the less fleet of foot, including Gilbert had been taken away, and held at Mbankana and then Maluku, before ending up in Makala prison.

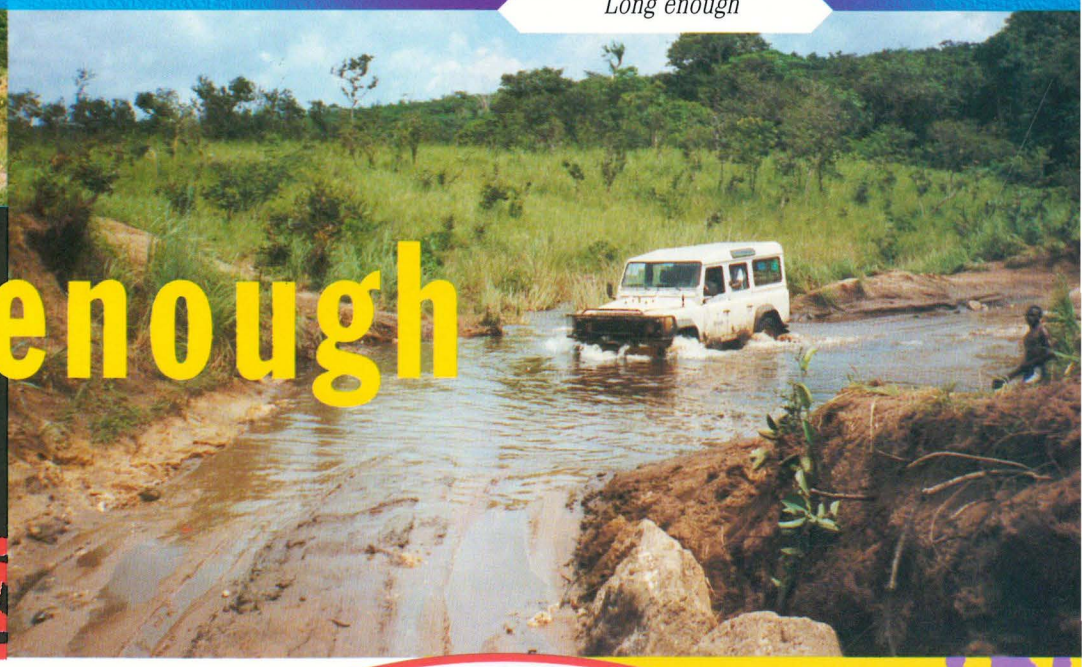
Where the church meeting had failed to act, retribution, it seemed, would be coming from a different quarter. "God moves in a mysterious way ...," we said, but felt sorry all the same for Gilbert. Something of a country yokel, amiable and peaceable, his image was hardly that of a cattle-rustler.

Bwantaba's chief designated Papa Pierre and others to make representations on behalf of the prisoners, which they did over the next few weeks at Mbankana, Maluku and Makala prison. The young men had been led astray by the military they argued and in any case, only two beasts had gone missing.

Mysteriously, it transpired no-one would admit to having brought the charges. The farm project managers said, no, they hadn't lost anything. It must have been chief Labi. No, said chief Labi, he had not made a complaint against anyone. With such a closing of ranks there was no charge to answer.

It only remained for the village families to raise the fines and "expenses" which would buy release. Eventually, armed with NZ7,000,000 (about US $60) and two goats, the delegation engaged in a few days of haggle and time-wasting before Gilbert and Co were released. A lorry to the Mai Ndombe, a canoe across, and then 25 miles on foot got them back to the village at midnight, exhausted.

Next morning we thanked Gilbert for the use of his hut, and congratulated him on his release from prison. He looked thin, and said he was ill. Had they fed him? Not too well, but family members had brought food. Had he slept on a cold, hard floor? No, on a thick piece of sponge. It was no place to be, he said. A few weeks had been long enough.

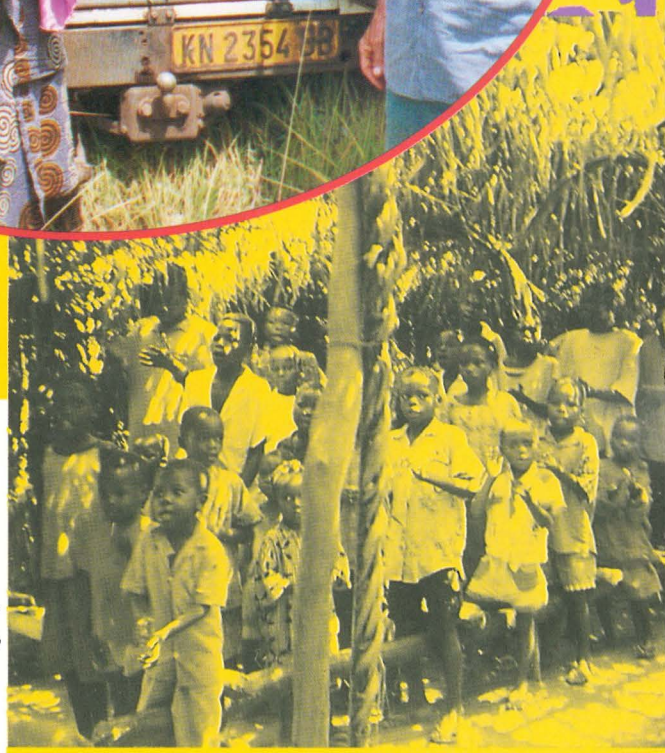


Long enough

"... Mukoko ... gave thanks for the release and safe return of their unfortunate bretheren."

Above: Return journey from Bwantaba with Pastor Mbieme's wife and daughter.

Below right: Bwantaba church, Bateke plateau



On the Sunday, Mukoko did the pastoral prayer and gave thanks for the release and safe return of their unfortunate brethren. This appeared to bring the episode to a close. Only later did we learn that a debt remained to be settled with a local moneylender (shark) within the month, or else he would reclaim double the amount.

At least the air cleared enough to get to the purpose of our visit, which was to encourage each of the groups on the plateau to send their women leaders to a training seminar at Bwantaba in early January. Round the log fire that evening we tried to concentrate their minds on the logistics of lodging and feeding about 30 women from other villages. All would need to lend a hand - women, children (to fetch water and firewood) and the men too.

Next day we made the long journey home, giving a lift to Pastor Mbieme's wife and their married daughter, who had visited. Mama Mbieme, being small, volunteered to go in the back with the baggage. It was still a tight fit, and we joked about shutting her up in her prison. When finally released, some seven hours later, after a very rough ride, she was still remarkably cheerful. A long, hard journey, I said. Long enough, she rejoined. Even a day in prison can be quite long enough.

Living in a fra

Margaret Pitt was a BMS volunteer worker in Serbia. Here she recounts some of her experiences.

I retired from work as a Social Services Manager in December 1995 and was accepted as a volunteer by BMS after I had completed the TEFL course in London. In March 1996 I went to teach for three terms, in a small Bible College in Novi Sad, in the former Yugoslavia, .

The students came from different backgrounds: a few came from Christian homes and had come to faith when quite young. Others had been brought up, knowing nothing about God but had met him in quite remarkable ways. Here are some of their stories, although the names of some have been changed.

Dragan was a punk, given to alcohol abuse and in his own words his way of life was "senseless and without morals". God's Spirit touched him and broke the bonds of evil that held him. Now he is the leader of the young people in the Baptist church and also of a very talented gospel band.

Dragan's wife, Snezana, comes from Macedonia and because of the poverty there she had to leave home at the age of 16 and go to Serbia to find employment. She was lonely and frightened and knew nothing about God except that she wanted to find him. She then met some Jehovah's Witnesses who gave her one of their Bibles. On her next journey home – an eight hour journey on a crowded train – she was sitting on her luggage reading this Bible when she noticed the man beside her was also reading a Bible. He was a Christian from Nepal and for the rest of the journey he explained the gospel to her and led her to faith in the Lord Jesus. She was introduced to a local fellowship where she met Dragan, and married him a year later. Now they are both training in the College.

Vladimir was another young man that I taught. He came from a strongly Communist family who were very proud when he joined the army at the outset of the war. I was talking one day about a visit I had made to Vukovar – a town that had been devastated by the Yugoslavian National Army with great civilian loss of life. Vladimir then told me that he had been involved in that bombing, looting and killing. When he left the army he went to University in Novi Sad but had serious psychiatric problems and became an alcoholic. "But then I met Jesus " he told me, and his life was changed. Vladimir is now a lovely gentle young man who is completing his theological training and is also working with his church among the thousands of refugees in Novi Sad. Part of the cost of

Part of the cost of being a follower of Jesus for Vladimir is estrangement from his family.

gile peace

War damage in Croatia

being a follower of Jesus for Vladimir is estrangement from his family.

Both the Baptist church and the College are involved in working with the many refugees who come daily for help. The refugees had to leave their homes in Bosnia and Croatia , often at a moment's notice.The workers in Tabita, the Humanitarian Aid Agency, distribute material aid that is sent from the West and also share the gospel whenever they can. There is a weekly meeting in the College building for the refugees called Open Door, when they have a Bible study, a cup of tea and an opportunity to share their views and grievances. Many are bitter and find it hard to forgive. The houses where they stay sleep up to 80 people of both sexes and all ages in one large room. They sleep in rows of bunk beds ,with scarcely enough room to walk between the rows and the lack of privacy is terrible. The Serbian Government offers no help and accepts no responsibility for people who used to live in another part of the former Yugoslavia.

Please tell people to pray for us. It's not over yet.

The peace, especially in Bosnia is still very fragile. Poverty, inflation and massive unemployment are causing great problems but the fear of many is a further outbreak of war. Many of the young people have suffered both physically and mentally as a result of the war that they neither wanted nor understood. Please pray for healing for this land and a great movement of the Holy Spirit to bring revival. It is not easy being a Christian here and young converts often have to face strong opposition from their families and the Orthodox Church. The message I was asked to bring home to the churches in Britain was "Please tell people to pray for us. It's not over yet."

Where are they now?

Alison Wilson

(Action Team, Italy 1992/93)

Alison remains in regular contact with many of the people she met during her six months in north east Italy - and cherishes the letters they send.

For ten years, her dream was to study in America: "My experience in Italy showed me many things, one of the greatest being my need to study the Bible more 'effectively' and with greater depth and discipline". But first she decided to find out about life in the world of work. Organising courses and conferences for the oil industry in her university town of Aberdeen, there was ample opportunity to introduce her colleagues to the love of God. Later she began working as au-pair to the Margus family in Seattle, and was able to share the story of Jesus with the children and discuss her faith with the parents.

On the east side of town stands the Lutheran Bible Institute - just what Alison had been looking for, but enrolment seemed impossible "All the obstacles that were in my way - finances, visa requirements, accommodation - have been swept away by a provision from God the like of which I have never experienced before. "

So, in September 1997, Alison began a nine-month certificate course in Biblical Studies and Theology. "My life seems so piecemeal but if you look at the whole picture there is such great purpose in all that has happened... I take comfort in looking back at the last ten years and seeing that a dream I had, to go to Bible college, is a dream God held and has now fulfilled."

Prayer *focus*

EUROPE

Mark and Claire Ord
Genova, ITALY

Mark and Claire are involved in pastoral work at Genova Baptist Church and are currently in consultation with the Italian Baptist Union about their next church placement. They have been encouraged by recent moves of the church to recognise and reach out to those in need in their local community.

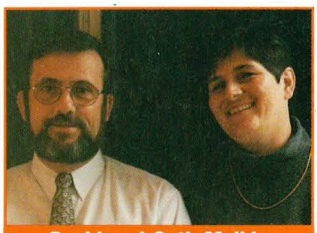
Mark has been involved in a committee drawing together 12 different churches, which is looking at ways to work with immigrants and the unemployed in Genova. They are keeping an updated list of unemployed people and their skills in the churches, so that if people hear of work or need work done, they can use people from the churches. They are also collecting offers of free service from professionals for those who cannot afford their services. Thus far they have offers from a GP, an obstetrician, a paediatrician, a lawyer and a union representative.

Another benefit of this group is the contact between the churches. Relations between the historical and new churches in the area have been difficult in recent years so it has been quite amazing to see representatives of so many different traditions working together.

Please pray:

- **the Ords are anxious to know where their next placement will be; they have been waiting some time to hear**
- **thank God for the positive contact between the local churches and pray for increased good relations and opportunities to work together**

BRAZIL



David and Cath Meikle
São Paulo, BRAZIL

David is pastor of the church at Parque Selecta. They are seeing an increased commitment from the members to evangelise and use their new church building for practical outreach into the community. Projects include teaching English and German and a few of the women are teaching various craft skills and hair dressing. Cath has begun a Well Woman clinic in the nearby favela, Montanhão (Big Mountain).

As well as being General Secretary of the ABC Association and teaching at a theological college, David is also co-ordinator of the state project at Heliopolis. He says: "When the builders walked away from a failed high-rise flat project in São Paulo, the poor moved in. At first they built shacks around the base of the concrete skeleton. Then families began to move in to the abandoned structure itself, creating walls out of waste wood and cardboard. That kind of scrappy approach to survival is what Heliopolis is all about. The community is one of the many favelas in São Paulo – unzoned, unserviced neighbourhoods where the poor have taken over vacant land to build their own homes. Heliopolis, São Paulo's largest slum, has more than 100,000 people packed into 20 city blocks.... Here we have a Project working in all areas of the community, we have a church planted and two congregations meeting daily along with the Centre where we offer life and employment skills to the residents of the favela."

Please pray:

- **for a new vision and wisdom in the tasks ahead for David, the Association and all his colleagues**
- **for safety as David travels long distances on often unsafe roads**
- **for the whole family as they settle into a new home**

ASIA

Martin and Katrina Butterworth
Kathmandu, NEPAL

The Butterworths have been in Nepal since January 1997 involved in language and orientation study and beginning work involved in engineering and community health. Learning Nepali has been a long, slow and painful process for Martin especially but he finally had something to show for his effort when he

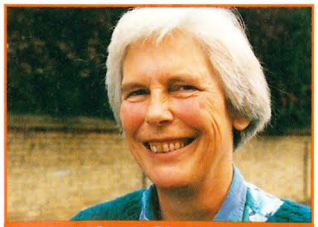
News from BMS colleagues and partners around the world to complement the BMS Prayer Guide

was invited to preach in their local church and managed to do at least part of it in Nepali.

Katrina began regular medical work in the New Year, renting a room to work from part-time with another missionary doctor, giving people an alternative to going to their homes. Many of their patients are very poor and their illnesses are often made worse by overcrowding and a poor diet. TB is very common.

Please pray:

- **for increased language skills, so vital for Katrina in dealing with patients and Martin in his work with engineers on the Nepal Hydro and Electric project**
- **Martin is seeking increased opportunities for involvement in local church and community life**



Janet Claxton
Vellore, INDIA

After retiring from her role as a full-time BMS missionary in Zaire, Janet decided she was not quite ready for putting her feet up and applied to BMS as a Barnabas Project volunteer. She is now based at Balanilayam Hostel, working alongside Ann Bothamley who began the hostel when she realised there was a need for the children of Indian Christian workers working in remote areas, to have the opportunity for a good education whilst living in a Christian family atmosphere. Ann, who is a Department Sister in the Christian Medical College Hospital, and her Australian friend, Marlienne, look after the 15 children currently in the hostel.

There are seven girls and eight boys ranging from seven to 17 years of age. They all attend Ida Scudder School where Janet, a school teacher, is working three mornings per week and giving help in Maths. She is also helping the teachers with project work, newly introduced into the syllabus, helps some small groups who struggle with Maths and occasionally takes classes when a teacher is absent.

The hostel building is currently being extended, although this is not without its difficulties, and a committee is actively seeking Indian houseparents to take over the running of the hostel.

Please pray:

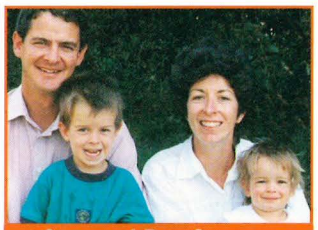
- **for strength to cope with the demands of 15 children and a new country and culture**
- **that the Lord would lead the right couple to the hostel to take over care of the children**

Around the world

Prayer *focus*

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Please remember Steve and Pam Seymour and Jenny Dorman who have begun leave of absence, and Glyn and Frankie Phillips who recently ended their service with BMS.



Steve and Pam Seymour
ZIMBABWE

Steve and Pam have left Zimbabwe after four years and moved to Steve's native Australia. The transition has not been easy and it was difficult to leave their many friends behind. The couple are renting a house in Adelaide and are still searching for a church to call home.

Please pray:

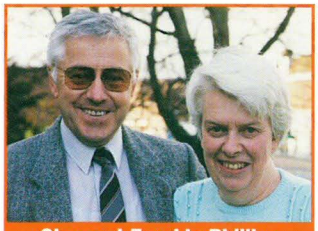
- **that the Lord will guide them**

Jenny Dorman
NEPAL

Jenny Dorman has returned to the UK after four years teaching English to senior Nepali staff of the United Mission to Nepal (UMN). After a period of Home Assignment visiting UK churches, she is to embark on a year of full-time study building on a distance learning programme she completed with the Open Theological College.

Please pray:

- **for her as she settles back in the UK and pray God will guide her as to her future with BMS**



Glyn and Frankie Phillips
NEPAL

Glyn and Frankie were sad to be told by doctors that they should return to the UK after nearly three years in Nepal. For the last two years, Glyn, who is an electrical engineer, had been planning with the Butwal project he worked on, what to do with a large sum of money which was expected. The money came through just as he was packing up the couple's home and he is frustrated he will not be there to help guide his Nepali colleagues in how to use it.

Please pray:

- **that God will guide them wisely and pray for Glyn and Frankie as they unexpectedly begin to settle into a new life back in the UK**

Around the world

Life Expectancy

	Men (years)	Women (years)	Average
Angola	-	-	46.5
Bangladesh	58.1	58.2	58.1
Belgium	73.9	80.6	77.3
Brazil	63.4	71.2	67.3
Central African Rep	-	-	48.6
DR Congo	51.3	54.5	52.9
France	74.6	82.9	78.8
India	62.1	62.7	62.4
Indonesia	63.3	67.0	65.1
Italy	75.1	81.4	78.3
Japan (highest)	76.9	82.9	80.0
Nepal	-	-	57.3
Portugal	71.8	78.9	75.4
Sierra Leone (lowest)	-	-	37.5
South Africa	62.3	68.3	65.2
Sri Lanka	-	-	73.1
Thailand	66.3	72.3	69.3
United Kingdom	74.5	79.8	77.1
Zimbabwe	47.6	49.4	48.5

Birth rates

	Crude birth rate*	Crude death rate
	per 1,000 population	
Afghanistan *(highest birth rate)*	53.4	20.8
Angola	47.7	18.7
Bangladesh	26.8	9.7
Belgium	11.2	10.5
Brazil	19.6	7.1
Central African Rep	37.6	16.4
DR Congo	44.9	13.5
Estonia *(lowest birth rate)*	9.0	-
France	11.6	9.1
India	25.2	9.0
Indonesia	23.1	7.6
Italy	9.1	9.9
Kuwait *(lowest death rate)*	-	2.2
Nepal	-	11.0
Portugal	11.2	10.9
Sierra Leone *(highest death rate)*	46.5	25.7
South Africa	29.7	7.9
Thailand	16.7	6.6
United Kingdom	11.9	11.1
Zimbabwe	37.1	14.6

*the crude birth rate is the number of live births in one year per 1,000 population.

Under five mortality

per 1,000 live births

Albania	41	Nepal	118
Angola	292	Nicaragua	68
Bangladesh	117	Niger (highest)	32
Belgium	10	Portugal	11
Brazil	61	South Africa	68
Central African Rep.	180	Sri Lanka	19
DR Congo	175	Thailand	32
El Salvador	56	United Kingdom	7
Finland	5*	Zimbabwe	81
France	9		
India	119		
Indonesia	111		
Italy	8		

* equal lowest with Iceland,and Sweden

(Latest available figures)

Cost of funerals around the world

Belgium £2500 (three month's salary) for cheapest basic funeral. This would include the services of the funeral director, the cost of the coffin, and a cup of coffee.

India (christian village funeral) Rs 2,000 (where Rs 40 is a daily wage for an agricultural worker) plus the community meal which would cost anything between Rs 2,000 and Rs 5,000. The family might borrow money for this. (Hindus) anything from Rs 1,000 to Rs 10,000.

Sri Lanka (all except Muslims who are buried the same day), the casket and embalming will cost anything between Rs 15,000 and Rs 65,000.

Sicily anything from 2,700,000 lit to over 20,000,000 lit for hearse, tomb, and permits. A middle class professional monthly salary would be 3,000,000 lit.

El Salvador 3,000 to 4,000 colones plus 10,500 colones for a basic plot in a commercial cemetery. (The minimum wage is 1050 colones - about £80 per month). The poorer people can only use the cheaper, overcrowded and ill kept public cemeteries.

Bangladesh (Christian) £20 - to make the wooden coffin, £10 for candles, scent and new clothes, £20 for the tea following the prayer meeting a week after the burial. (Hindu) at least £200 - wood has to be bought for the cremation plus rice meal given to large numbers.

Brazil (North East) R60,00 (half the minimum wage). This would buy the cheapest coffin and white grave clothes plus R2 for a bottle of raw rum to pay someone to dig the grave and R2 for two announcements on the radio for relatives who live further away.

Zimbabwe Z$ 1,200 (£40) for an average adult coffin plus up to Z$20,000 (£650) for car hire, buses, undertakers. A middle class person earns about £60 a week.

France - 12,000 fr to 15,000 fr not including the service or the flowers. The minimum take home wage is around 5,500 fr/month.

CUT & DETATCH

TAKE 2

Take 2
a resource for church leaders & workers

RESOURCES *for leaders*

FACTBOX

In **Belgium** there are set times for funerals: 9.00am, 10.00am, 11.00am etc. The later it is the more expensive it is! An afternoon or early evening funeral will be costly, but will be preferred to impress and avoid criticism.

In **Nepal** only the lower castes bury their dead and they do this by placing the body (no coffin) in a hole they have dug in their own land. After a Hindu funeral the family will not eat salt for ten days as part of the period of mourning.

In **Sri Lanka** christian hymns will always include "There's a land of pure delight" and "Safe in the arms of Jesus". In Sri Lanka the wreath stand legs are broken after the burial to prevent them being resold to someone else later on.

In **Italy** the body may not be moved from the place of death for 24 hours, not even placed in a coffin. Cremations are rare; the nearest crematorium to Sicily is Rome.

In **Bangladesh** the women and children wash and prepare the body in new clothes. They also light candles and pour scent on the body. The men and the boys dig the grave.

In **El Salvador** friends of the family will organise door-to-door collections in local neighbourhoods to help with the funeral expenses.

In **Brazil** the only time most people wear socks is as part of their grave clothes. In North East Brazil most people do not have the money to pay for a coffin themselves, so a local politician will usually arrange it.

In **Zimbabwe** people are expected to live up to the age of 60 plus. In reality 45 per cent won't live that long.

In **France** people are buried in family groups and the body is taken back to the place from which the family comes.Most people arrange for a 30 year lease on a plot of land. Cremation was forbidden by the Catholic church until 1963 and still is unusual today.

Thanks to:
Joyce and Stuart Filby, Belgium
Paul Drinkwater, Nepal
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Margaret Goodall, Sri Lanka
Chris Mattock, Italy
David Quinney Mee, El Salvador
Sue Headlam, Bangladesh
Daveen Wilson, Brazil
Bernard Phiri, UK Action Team
John Wilson, France

For discussion

How do we in our society mark the end of a life? Evaluate both good and bad points in what is done.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Distinguishing ideas

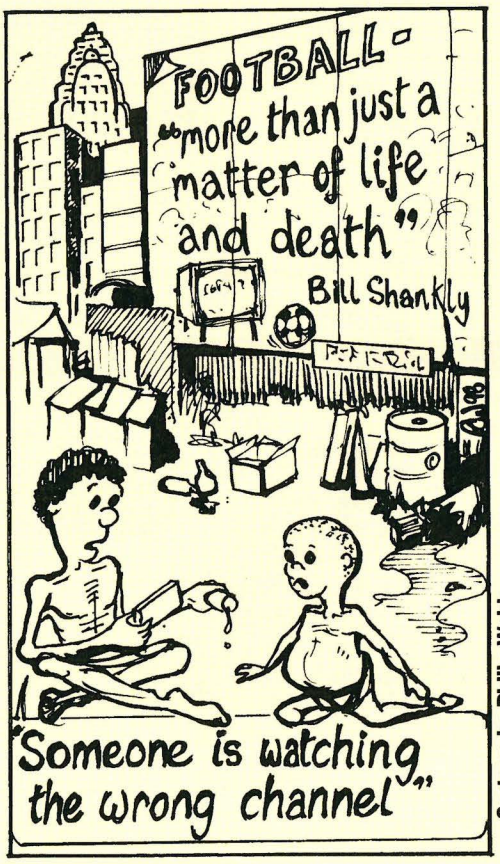
One of the greatest difficulties for missionaries is to distinguish between ideas cultural and ideas Christian. Western democracy is just that, western.

There are few places more democratic than an African village, but it is not our democracy, and existed before Christianity came. Even in African countries which are overwhelmingly Christian the man in the street believes in the power of the word. The man who says it will be wrong is seen as being responsible for the failure. Western democracy believes in an opposition. In African eyes the opposition is the source of all failings, hence one party states.

It is also interesting to speculate that for 80 per cent of the church's life the majority of the western world was without large scale democracy.

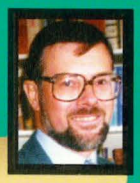
Democracy is a wonderful modern western invention, but it should not be confused with Christianity. Christianity is concerned with honesty truthfulness and love and it is not a political system.

Yours sincerely
Bob Ellett
Butwal, Nepal



Cartoon by Philip Webb

The WAY I SEE IT



ANOTHER EXTRACT FROM THE (WHOLLY IMAGINARY) PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE OF **PHILIP CLEMENTS–JEWERY**

DEAR VAL

I was delighted when I visited your church recently to see how much you are on the ball with your work as missionary secretary. I was impressed by your notice board and how up-to date you are keeping it. It was also good to see the way you are keeping in touch with your link missionaries and ensuring that everyone in the church hears the latest news. The number of people you have who take ***mh*** is really impressive! I was also pleased to learn that there is a regular 'spot' for BMS matters in Sunday mrning services and that the BMS Prayer Guide and Prayer Tapes are regularly used in the weekly programme of the church. Keep up the good work!

Yours

Philip

DEAR PHILIP

Thank you for your encouraging letter. Yes, I have found that what I have been doing has paid off in terms of missionary interest in our church. It has also led to increased giving to the work of the BMS and above all, to prayer. The folk here are excited by the replies they get to their letters and e-mails they have sent to our link missionary family. It matters a lot to them that we have this personal link.

Yours in Christ

Val

DEAR VAL

Thanks for your letter. However, I confess I do have a slight worry about what you have been doing, inspite of its real and impressive achievements. Today the world-wide mission of the Church is no longer about churches in the developed world sending people to materially poor and spiritually deprived countries. In some ways, it is now we who are poor and Christians overseas who have so much to offer us. These days there is much more emphasis on partnership in the gospel and in what is called 'reverse-flow'. I wonder how it is possible to keep up interest in overseas mission in the local congregation if the emphasis is more on partnership than on missionaries. Do you have any ideas about this?

Your fellow-worker in the gospel

Philip

DEAR PHILIP

You have a point but I fear that if we lessened the emphasis on sending missionaries, the interest in the work of BMS here would also be reduced. The concept of 'partnership' does not have a face or a name like a missionary. Also, people find it much easier to give than to receive. It's hard to admit that we might be lacking spiritually in some way and that our fellow Christians overseas might have something to share with us. But I do try to publicise information about national churches as well as give prominence to our link missionaries. I will also write to World Mission Link at Didcot to see if they have any suggestions in this respect. Anyway, thank you for making me think about my job as missionary secretary.

With love and best wishes

Val

What do you think? Take part in this debate. Write to us in about 120 words: BMS, Baptist House, 129 Broadway, Didcot, Oxon, OX11 8XA or e-mail mail@bms.org.uk

Action Card

Environmental Pollution

Bhopal remains in our memory as a bitter disaster. Although there have been improvements, many problems remain. Chemicals which are banned in the West because they are dangerous, are still exported – notably DDT. The extent of consequences is not always realised. Dr Lall, General Secretary of the Church of North India, provides the following information. "In Ludhiana, 60 samples of milk were found to be contaminated with DDT and 73 per cent of the residue was much above the tolerance level. DDT residues were found in all 112 samples of bovine milk collected from four villages on the Sangurur district of Punjab.

The chemical industry contributes about seven per cent to India's Gross National Product and employs six per cent of the industrial labour force. India has a growing chemical industry and control is a problem. More deaths occur among workers in the chemical industry than any other. After the Bhopal tragedy the Indian government, together with the International Labour Organisation, identified 307 major hazardous industrial units, the highest number being in Gujarat. In an outbreak of toxic poisoning in Bitchiri, 60 wells were contaminated, hundreds of livestock died, 500 acres of agricultural land became uncultivable and drinking water was no longer available within a five kilometre radius. A drilled rig commissioned by official agencies revealed that the water was polluted to a depth of 200 feet. This toxic effluent had been produced by five companies and it had been flowing for a year before it was detected by the central government."

Please send this month's card to Mr Nirmal Andrews, Joint Secretary, Ministry of the Environment, CGO Complex, New Delhi, India. Encourage him and his team to carry out their essential task of protecting and improving the environment in India ●

BMS, Baptist Union, Church of Scotland, Methodist Church, United Reformed Church.

WANTED

SHORT-TERM HOSTEL PARENTS

Short-term hostel parents are needed for three months from January to March 1999, at KISC (Kathmandu International Study Centre) in Kathmandu.

KISC is a school run jointly between INF (International Nepal Fellowship) and UMN (United Mission to Nepal) and has students from 11 to 17. The hostel will have one 16/17 year old and the rest will be younger.

Interested? For more details please contact Carolyn Cole, BMS Volunteer Co-ordinator. Tel 01235 512077.

Putting a piece of the UK Action on hold....

In the March/April issue of ***mh***, we asked if your church would be interested in hosting the 28:19 UK Action team during 1998/1999. We have had many responses and have successfully contacted seven churches around the UK that are looking forward to working with the team. Therefore, all the placements for the team have now been booked up so if you didn't get in with your request quickly enough, I'm afraid you will have to wait until 2000! If you would like a week's visit from any of the other 28:19 Action Teams from April to June 1999 please contact your BMS Co-ordinator.

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Checkout

Missionary Movements

MAY	JUNE
Arrivals	**Arrivals**
Sheila Samuels from Delhi, India	Katie Norris from Jumla, Nepal
Kevin and Linda Donaghy from Lisbon, Portugal	David Payne from Kathmandu, Nepal
Stuart and Joyce Filby from Ostende, Belgium	Christine Preston from Kathmandu, Nepal
	Margaret Swires from Natal, Brazil
Departures	**Departures**
Stuart and Joyce Filby to Ostende, Belgium	Kevin and Linda Donaghy to Lisbon, Portugal
Margot Bafende to Mbanza Ngungu, Democratic Republic of Congo	

The Last Word

GERRY MYHILL

Gerry Myhill is a BMS missionary working in Antonina, Brazil

Antonio was six feet tall, had an enormous nose, was as strong as an ox, and was 45 years old. But he went down with hepatitis. I visited him on various occasions, and when he died his wife – a little Japanese woman called Maria – sent for me to do his funeral. I arrived at the house feeling terrible, as unknowingly I myself was already ill with the same disease.

ILLUSTRATION BY SARAH PRENTICE

The little wooden house and garden were overflowing with people. The coffin with Antonio – who was a bright yellow – was on the table in the kitchen where everybody could see them. Before long the wife, who was busy at the stove beside her dead husband, brought me an enormous plate of rice and beans, with a great piece of greasy meat on top. The very sight and smell of the food along with the temperature of almost 100 degrees just about finished me off!

I picked my way down the garden stopping to talk to others until I came to the well at the bottom. I sat on the edge of the well, toying with the food, pretending to eat it. Antonio's dog had followed me, and sat at my feet. While nobody was looking I flipped the meat onto the ground beside him; he looked at me, looked at the meat, and then carefully picked it up and took it up to the house where he laid it neatly beside the coffin. Within minutes Maria came running down the garden, calling out "Pastor, the dog has stolen your meat!"She then placed an even larger and greasier piece on my plate to replace it.

When it came to the time to take the coffin out we had to take part of the side of the house out to make room, as the doorway wasn't wide enough. It was now teeming down in a tropical storm after the build-up of the heat of the day.

"...the wife, who was busy at the stove beside her dead husband, brought me an enormous plate of rice and beans."

We had to carry the coffin on our shoulders for about a mile to the graveyard up on the hill. The rain continued and on arrival we had to find the shovels, and dig a hole. We were trying to convince ourselves that the hole was deep enough when Maria broke in with "but Pastor, Antonio's nose will stick out of the ground". We dug on; the rains fell, and eventually Antonio was safely buried to everybody's satisfaction.

The next morning I awoke, feeling terrible. On arrival in front of the bathroom mirror I discovered that I was exactly the same colour as Antonio had been the day before! ●

Harvest Appeal 98

BMS/Operation Agri

a harvest of health

Parbarti's story

Parbarti looks the picture of health. Life has dramatically changed for her since the Gorkha Community Health Programme came to her village in Nepal.

People like Parbarti are dying daily because of:

- inadequate nutrition
- dirty and polluted water
- poor sanitation
- insufficient knowledge about health issues

Give someone a harvest of health this year!

Make sure you get the **July/August** issue of **mh**, containing a special eight-page pull-out section, featuring the Gorkha Community Health Programme, and harvest celebration ideas. A resource pack will also be available, including : ● a poster, ● fact sheet, ● gift envelopes, ● youth and childrens' resource, ● OHPs and a video filmed on location in Gorkha.

To subscribe to mh phone Rob Vaines on 01235 512077 ext 283, or speak to your BMS Co-ordinator or church magazine distributor.

BMS making mission possible

Operation Agri BMM supports a wide variety of development projects in different countries

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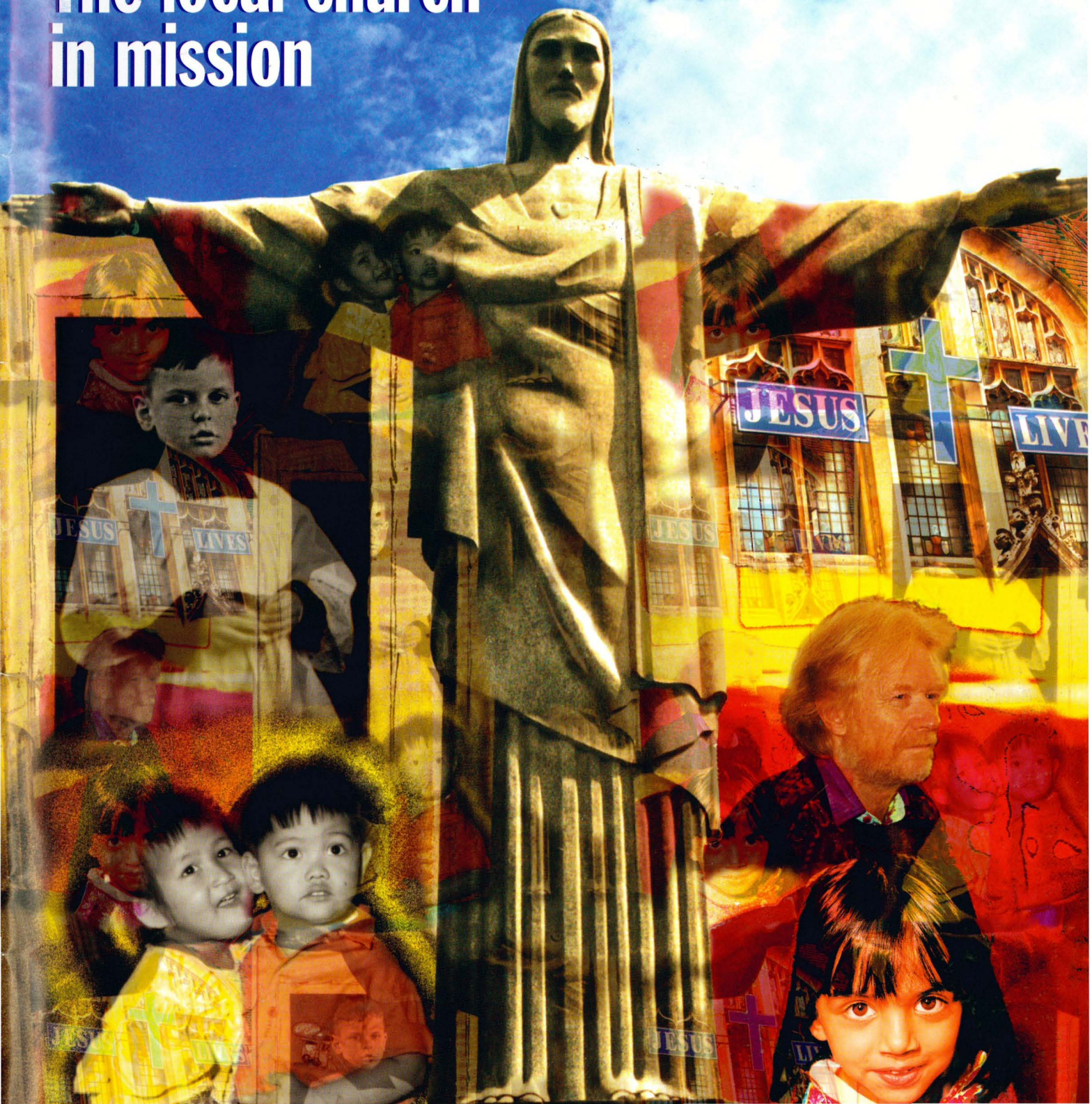
INTERNATIONAL

The local church in mission



Is God calling you to overseas service?

Do you have skills and expertise

Community health
Dentistry
General practice
Gynaecology
Health education
Health project training and development
Midwifery
Non-formal education
Nursing
Nurse training/supervision
Nutrition
Obstetrics
Occupational therapy
Ophthalmology
Paediatrics
Physiotherapy
Psychiatry
Psychiatric nursing
Psychology
Radiology
Recreational therapy
Social Work
Surgery
Training children with disabilities
Ultrasonics

Opportunities in these and other areas exist with BMS in:

Afghanistan

Bangladesh

Bulgaria

China

Cyprus

Democratic Republic of Congo

Nepal

North Africa

Portugal

in one of the following areas?:

Accountancy
Administration
Computer programming
Fundraising
Office management
Personnel work
Project development
Public relations

Biomedical maintenance
Carpentry
Electrical engineering
Horticulture
Mechanics
Mechanical engineering
TV programme production
Water engineering

Church ministry
Theological teaching

Special education teaching
TEFL teaching

Want to know more?

Contact Andrew North, BMS, PO Box 49, Didcot, Oxon, OX11 8XA. Tel 01235 512077. Email anorth@bms.org.uk

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July/August

THIS ISSUE
THE LOCAL CHURCH IN MISSION

Jan Kendall

What do you think of when you see a heading like "The local church in mission"?

Excitement and anticipation at seeing God at work?
A feeling of "Oh no, this might require me to do something!"?
Pleasure that someone somewhere else is doing something for the Kingdom?
Or a kind of smugness that all these enthusiasts are "Not in my back yard"?

Well, sorry to disappoint you if you went along with any of the last three thoughts, because this issue of *mh* shows that mission isn't just "over there"; it's here, in our "back yards" too, and it's being done by ordinary people like you and me.

That's why real-life Kingdom-building accounts of what mission-minded people are doing in London and Shetland have been included as part of our features section.

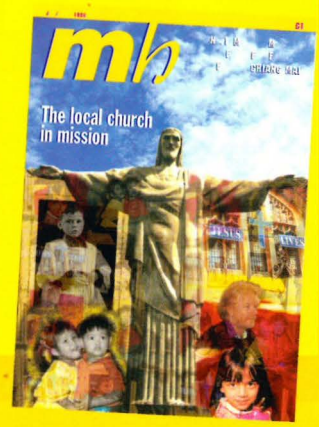
As *mh* columnist Mike Pilavachi said at the recent Baptist Assembly in Blackpool, mission is not blinking at people in Sainsbury's and seeing them instantly getting converted. It doesn't mean that we will have an easier life.

Being mission-minded could be back breaking, thirst making, time consuming, physically demanding, hand dirtying, emotionally devastating, faith challenging, socially draining, prayer stretching, feet aching, risk taking, heart searching and dangerous! It could well cut across your well-thought-out hopes and ambitions.

But mission is the essence of the heart of God. And I'm sure, like King David in the Old Testament, we are seeking to be people after God's own heart.

This issue also contains an eight-page pull-out section featuring the BMS/Operation Agri Harvest Appeal "A harvest of health". Although we've included a lot of information to help you plan your harvest later this year, there's also a wealth of goodies you can send for as part of your celebrations.

Jan



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NEXT ISSUE SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER
THE CHALLENGE OF OTHER FAITHS

BMS PUBLICATIONS

News

Iraq

The Bible Society in Jordan has been given permission to distribute 200,000 New Testaments to christian students in Iraq, the first time that such a large distribution to schoolchildren has been allowed. Jamal Hashweh, the General Secretary of the Bible Society in Jordan said: "This is a wonderful opportunity in the biblical land of Babylon to provide copies of the New Testament so that christian students can study about Jesus for themselves." (Bib Soc)

Spain

Christians in Spain are mounting a protest against a recent government crackdown aimed at shutting down 17 evangelical radio stations known as "Radio Amistad" (Friendship Radio). The government maintains that the stations are operating without licences, but for years evangelical radio stations have applied for licences and been denied them. They claim the government is applying a dual standard. There are some 600 radio stations in Spain operating without licences, including many of the Roman Catholic Church. (EBPS)

Thailand

The Baptist World Alliance has appealed to the United Nations following the worsening of the political crisis between the Karen refugees in Thailand and the military government of Myanmar (Burma). In March, 1,600 huts in the Huay Kalok refugee camp were burned by the Democratic Buddhist Karen Army, supported by the Burma military government. More than 100,000 Baptist refugees live under constant attack on the Thai/Burmese border. (BWA)

Bulgaria

Leaders of the five denominations which make up the Evangelical Alliance in Bulgaria (Baptist, Methodist, Congregational, Church of God, and Pentecostal) have met with Petar Stoyanov, the President of Bulgaria. It is reported that the President showed understanding and promised to help as much as he could for a change in attitude toward evangelical churches in that country. (BSG)

News in Brief

North Africa

Annual Muslim migration gives opportunity for the gospel

The annual migration of thousands of Muslims has provided an opportunity to take the message of the gospel into North African countries traditionally closed to missionary activity.

Every year, around one million people cross the Mediterranean, mostly between June and September, when they take their annual leave and visit family and dependents in North Africa. The majority come from France, with others from Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, England and Germany.

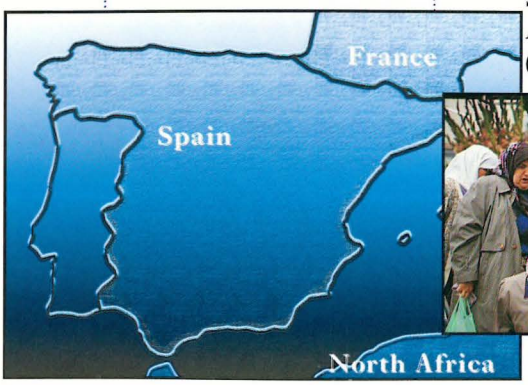
Volunteers from several mission organisations have joined forces to create Operation Transit, a "multi-partner initiative" which hands out booklets, tapes and videos to travellers as they walk or drive onto the ships.

Operation Transit began in the Spanish port of Algeciras in 1993. The idea has now spread to other ports and ferry terminals in Spain, France, Malta and Sicily.

Around 700 volunteers are expected to take part this year handing out Arabic Scripture portions, and versions of the Jesus film. Each item includes special inserts detailing gospel satellite and radio broadcasts, and opportunities for correspondence with Christian ministries in Europe. Among the letters received from people who have become Christians after reading or listening to the evangelistic material was one from a man who found a New Testament on a beach, and a teenager who was given a copy by his uncle who worked at a North African port.

There are accounts that bus drivers have shown the Jesus video to their passengers. After some complaints on one occasion, the bus driver concluded that if the video was about Jesus or Mohammed, then it was good.

One of the participants, YWAM's North Africa director, Garry Tissingh said "We see this as an excellent strategy for reaching people with whom we might otherwise not have contact, and have them take materials into the region. God is really using this effort." Other groups taking part include the Bible Society of Spain, Campus Crusade for Christ, Operation Mobilisation, Southern Baptists and Assemblies of God. (YWAM News)



Peru
Human rights award for prison reformers

Three church workers received the 1997 human rights award for their years of work in Peru's prisons. Sofia Macher, the director of the National Human Rights Co-ordinating Committee, said that Sr Ana Marzolo, Sr Ellen Conway and Sr Madeleine Wartelle were nominated by the inmates of Peru's Lurigancho prison, who asked that another award ceremony be held in the prison, so that they could applaud too.

The three women spend most of their days in the prison. Marzolo set up a substance-abuse rehabilitation programme called Anda (which means "walk" in Spanish) in Lurigancho prison; the programme is housed in what was once the solitary confinement cell, "Siberia". Today the Anda cell block does not have bars. Prisoners clean their cells, cook for themselves and have access to a plot of ground outdoors where they grow their own vegetables.

"These guys are like family," Marzolo said. "After so many years together, you get to know each other well. People think I'm crazy, but I would never want to do other pastoral work."

The sisters praised the prisoners solidarity with one another, but also drew attention to the serious problems plaguing Peru's prison system.

The worst problem is overcrowding. Lurigancho was built in 1964 to house 1,500 inmates, but today holds more than 6,000 prisoners.

Prison riots have occurred in several South American countries recently, including Brazil, Colombia, Panama and Paraguay, all for the same reason: inmates protesting against overcrowding and abuses. (LAP)

Alistair Brown

Change and stability

A crowded city centre street, with people dodging the traffic, or waiting to cross. That's not special until you know this is Skanderbeg Square in Tirana, capital of Albania, and that none of the traffic existed only a few years ago.

Until this decade the closed country of Albania had so few cars you could easily count them. Politicians and the military had a small number of vehicles, and that's all. Everyone else walked or used horse and cart.

Now it's changed. Albania has been through one of the fastest and greatest changes of modern times. Much of the change is good, but it's left an unstable country with an unpredictable future. As Albania stays uncomfortably near our headlines, pray for the nation, for the young church, and for those who work there in Christ's name to shape the future God's way. ●

Life inside a Brazilian prison

FOLHA DO SAU PAULO

WORLD News

Benjamin Netanyahu

Israel

Restrictive religious bills introduced to Knesset

A bill introduced into the Israeli Knesset (parliament) last year that would have severely restricted how Christians shared the gospel has lost one of its two backers, Member of the Knesset (MK) Nissin Zvilli.

Zvilli has agreed to withdraw his sponsorship and oppose the passage of the bill, although it is still officially in process, having passed one of the three readings required to make it a law. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has announced his opposition to the bill.

The bill would fine those who possess, print, import, copy or distribute literature of any kind that contains "an inducement for religious conversion". Those found guilty would be punished by up to a year in prison, according to the bill.

In addition, another bill has been proposed by MK Rafael Pinchasi which would imprison for three years and fine 50,000 shekels "anyone who preaches with the purpose of causing another person to change his religion".

It is expected to be introduced into the Knesset soon for a preliminary vote. (EBPS)

Bosnia

Innocent Victim
by Mauricio Palacio

Arts touch wounded hearts

Organisers of an ambitious musical production believe that the arts can help bring peace to the region torn apart by civil war.

A 50-strong group of dancers, mime artists and musicians is due to stage a multi-media product-ion urging reconciliation in seven cities across Bosnia, Serbia and Croatia.

The work, A Song in the Night, is allegorical, and tells the story of a farmer and his son whose workers fall out with each other, and is intended to subtly "encourage people to think about learning to live together, rather than getting caught up in bitterness over the past".

It has been co-ordinated by missionary painter and sculptor Mauricio Palacio, after he spent three months helping resettle people who fled their homes at the height of the "ethnic cleansing".

"The programme could reach people better than a sermon", says Palacio, because "art can portray powerful messages in a non-threatening way. Because of all the horrors they have experienced, they may respond better to something that weeps and feels with them, rather than someone coming and telling them they are wrong and they have to change."

A song in the Night is scheduled to go on tour in August and September. (YWAM News)

Northern Ireland

Prayer walk for peace unites communities

Protestant and catholic young people are to join forces in a marathon prayer walk around the Northern Irish borders, seeking peace, reconciliation and unity.

Teenagers and young adults from Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, and elsewhere will take part in this 600-mile journey, due to begin on Sunday 12 July. The walk will start in Belfast and passes through former trouble spots like Londonderry and Enniskillen.

The event leader, Mike Oman, hopes to see up to 1,500 young people taking part; some for one week, and others for the entire route. He said: "we feel that young people need to be given the opportunity to be pro-active in expressing their desire to move on from the past and embrace God's future for their country. We hope that by participating together they will gain new levels of understanding, respect and appreciation - and a sense of ownership."

The walk is one of several prayer initiatives in Northern Ireland that are uniting Christians in praying for their communities and their country. (YWAM News)

Inspiration, motivation, ideas, news on world mission for churches

World Mission Link

Action Teams hit UK again

Returning Action Teams were let loose on UK churches during May and June and have now completed their eight-week tour of the UK. During this time they visited in excess of 145 churches, sharing their experiences with over one thousand people through drama, song, testimony, video, slide shows and in many other ways.

Many team members are now going on to University where they will continue to tell others what God is doing overseas and what he can do through individual believers.

TaKE the RiSK UK Tour

This multi-media event will challenge you to Take a Risk for God in your lives...

Coming your way... See back cover for details

TaKE the RiSK

WORLDED

Worldwide - so much more than a prayer tape

Prayer is essential for the work of mission. We know that with God's guidance prayer changes things.

Every month BMS AV Co-ordinator Andy Smith produces the Worldwide prayer tape. On this tape he talks to BMS personnel in the UK or overseas, so that you actually hear them speaking about their work, and in particular any aspects which they find moving or challenging.

"We find actually hearing the missionary's voice creates a better understanding" says Andy. "You can actually hear the excitement or disappointment coming across in their voices."

Even when time is limited, you can still listen to Worldwide in your car or sitting down with a cup of tea. Or you can listen in a group and pray together afterwards.

Subscription to Worldwide is free so long as tapes are returned the following month. All we ask is that you send a 31p stamp to cover postage.

Dates for your Diary

Events & Meetings

Lymm
4 and 5 July
Mission weekend, Lymm Baptist Church
More information: Cath Mawson 01274 487341

Arnesby
Sat 22 August
Leicester BMS Auxiliary FUN-DAY
More information: Theo Lambourne 0116 271 3633

Bridgend
1 to 8 August
National Eisteddfod
Visit the BU of Wales and BMS tent, lots of resources
More information: Gareth Hutchinson 01792 360909

Cotswolds
5 and 6 September
Fosse Way Fellowship Mission Weekend
More information: Dennis Floodgate 01285 641840

Norwich
1 to 8 August
Leading Edge. Speakers include Alistair Brown and Carolyn Green; also BMS stall and exhibition. Thorpe St Andrew School.
More information: Leading Edge hotline: 01328 864801

Aberystwyth
8 to 11 September
Wales Annual Bi-lingual WMA Conference
More information: Delyth Wyn Davies 01766 512957

CUT & DETATCH

I would like to receive a free monthly copy of Worldwide:

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Send to BMS, PO Box 49, Baptist House, Didcot, OX11 8XA.

News

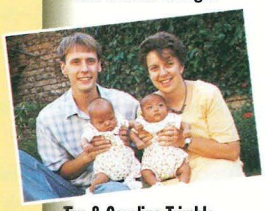
Frank Gouthwaite

Frank Gouthwaite, BMS missionary in Salvador, Brazil is seriously ill with a brain tumour. He has come back from Brazil and is now with his wife Peggy in Birmingham. In a recent letter to head office Frank and Peggy wrote:
"We do continue to hope and pray, trying to be within God's will for the moment and not worrying about the future.
At home we remain cheerful. The girls are happy and adjusting to school very well here in Birmingham. The two in Sevenoaks find it more difficult.
We thank all of you who are concerned and remembering us in prayer.
God bless you all. "

David Kerrigan

David Kerrigan, BMS Regional Representative for Asia has recently been appointed as President of the United Mission to Nepal. This means he has the responsibility of chairing meetings of the Executive of the Board - which take place twice a year - and between these meetings, liaising with the UMN Director. His appointment comes at the time when a new Director, Michael Askwith, takes up his responsibilities.

David & Janet Kerrigan


Tim & Caroline Trimble

Tim and Caroline Trimble

Tim and Caroline Trimble who work in Kathmandu, Nepal are adopting twin girls. They were born in February. Karuna Naomi is the elder one, and Samjhana Ruth the younger of the two. Samjhana is a Nepali name meaning rememberance and Karuna means mercy.

SAT 7

SAT 7, the TV broadcasting service for Christians of the Middle East has increased its broadcast time on both its satellites. This has increased to three hours on both Friday and Sunday on EUTELSAT 2F3, and is now also broadcasting to most of the Gulf region on a new frequency on PANAMSAT-4. BMS is a member of the SAT 7 Partnership Council.

News in Brief

New President: John Barclay

John Barclay has taken over the Presidency of the BMS from the AGM held at the Blackpool Assembly.

John is a former President of the Baptist Union of Scotland, and has had a long association with BMS and world mission.

John says he plans to use his presidential year "meeting people in formal and informal opportunities, mid-week and Sundays, to encourage them in mission at home and abroad so that God's kingdom will grow."

New Vice-President: Andrew Green

Andrew Green is a man with mission in his genes. His grandfather, Joseph, had four children, all of whom went into some sort of christian ministry.

But none of his Christianity is second-hand; he was converted while at university, and realised during his last year of studies that God was calling him into ministry too.

Having studied for a PGCE at Regent's College, Oxford, he worked as a travelling secretary with IVF (now UCCF, a student christian organisation). Andrew then found himself as a full-time pastor of Poynton Baptist Church – without any proper training! After four years of this life he left Poynton to study at Spurgeon's College, and at this time he also pastored a church at Islington. After graduating he went to Bookham Baptist Church in Surrey. The church grew, so much so that the building needed extending. He was there six years.

Now he is Senior Pastor at Upton Vale Baptist Church, Torquay. His initial reaction to being asked to stand for BMS President was "No", but on being asked a second time, he thought maybe God was speaking to him.

Over the last three years Andrew has led missionary retreats and says he felt "strangely at home". He has visited Cameroon, Brazil and Nepal.

Andrew is concerned that mission has for too long been regarded as an arena for specialists instead of being at the centre of normal christian life. He plans to encourage us all to make links in our lives, especially the link between loving our God and loving others too.

Planned Withdrawal For Brazil

General Committee voted to withdraw gradually the presence of long-term BMS missionaries in Brazil over the next twelve years, handing over the work to Brazilian Partner Bodies, and also increasing opportunities for service for volunteers and Action Teams.

David Martin, BMS Director of Operations presented the thinking of a Working Group and results of consultations.

Brazil, as a country, has four times as many Baptists as the UK. There are 5,629 churches in the Brazilian Baptist Convention, with nearly one million members. Thousands are in theological training, and national targets aim to increase the number of churches to 7,500 with two million members by the year 2000. It is estimated that "evangelical Christians" make up about 15 per cent of the population (that is, 25 million people).

BMS strategy is seeking to focus on less evangelised regions of the world. So work in Brazil will be phased out, beginning with a handing over to Brazilian colleagues at the end of 1999. BMS personnel will be redeployed, so that BMS can respond to new openings quickly - much more quickly than by recruiting new workers.

It is hoped that active partnership will continue and that work will be concentrated particularly in areas where Brazilian Baptist Conventions have fewer resources. Longer term missionaries will be supported for strategic work up to the end of the next decade. Increased opportunities for short-term help, visits of volunteers, and Action Teams would all be encouraged. It is also hoped that there will be further co-operation with the World Missions Board, (whose office is in Rio), within Latin America, and with the Fellowship of British Baptists in the UK.

Baptist House News

Welcome to

Gruffydd Rhys Davies

Gruffydd Rhys Davies born to Delyth Wyn Davies, BMS Co-ordinator for North Wales on 8 May 1998. Gruffydd Rhys weighed 8lb 8oz; and both mum and baby are doing well.

Delyth is currently taking maternity leave, but will be back in her post in September.

Chandraghona Hospital gets Half a Million Grant

Chandraghona Hospital, Bangladesh, where BMS nurse Sue Headlam works, has been given a grant of half a million pounds by a German christian support agency, Evangelische Zentralstelle Für Entwicklungshilfe (EZE).

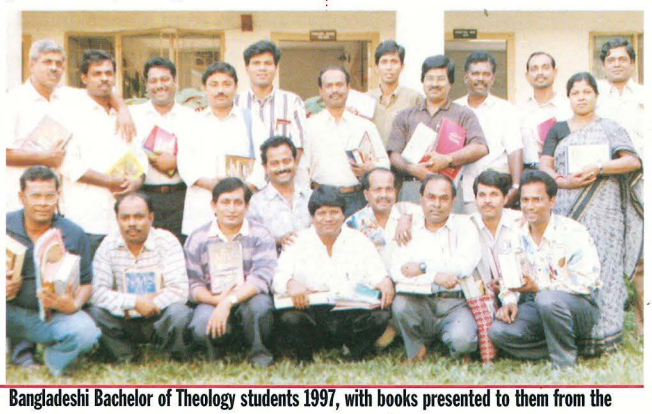
This money will be used to renovate the general hospital buildings. Extensive construction work, resulting in new wards, operating theatre suite, laboratory, X-ray and administrative block, will start later this year. The old buildings will be partially demolished.

Scottish Baptist Book Project

Last year grants totalling nearly £6,000 were channelled through BMS by Scottish Baptists to provide much-needed theological books for pastors overseas. These pastors are students and are training to work with churches with which the BMS is associated. Annually student needs are identified by BMS, and the Book Project aims to supply at least a Bible Dictionary and Bible Commentary to each of these pastoral students, and where possible to provide a mini library as well. Most of these students cannot afford to buy study books in their own languages.

In 1997 the following grants were made: £1,200 to Bangladesh (21 students); £950 to Yakusu, Congo (19 students); £473 to Bolobo, Congo (7 students); £202 to Kimpese, Congo (3 students);£300 to Kinshasa, Congo (6 students); £720 to Angola (9 students); £800 to Nicaragua (10 students); and £1,043 to India (36 students).

The Bangladeshi students in their letter of thanks list their areas of expertise and service as follows:
James Das, evangelist with the Baptist Church;
Andrew Biswas, new church project worker;
Robert Baroi, evangelist with a Korean Church;
Samuel Bala, TEE (Theological Education by Extension) Co-ordinator;
Milton Karmokar, World Vision worker;
Bimol Roy, pastors a rural Baptist church;
Profullo Roy, school teacher;
Monika Roy, will head up the Lutheran Church's Women's work;
Nimai Das, evangelist for the Santal Lutheran Church;
Shoban Kisku, teacher and evangelist for the Santal Lutheran Church;
Ashim Baroi, Pastoral Superintendent;
John Sorkar, evangelist for the Bapt Church;
Samuel Mardi, pastoral leader of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Bangladesh
Bibhash Biswas, evangelist and development worker;
Hans Hasdak, evangelist with the Santal Lutheran Church;
David Sorkar, translator for the Christian Literature Centre;
Paul Das, Christian Recording Ministry;
Michael Memon, pastor of Baptist church;
Ranjit Biswas, pastor and Sunday school Co-ordinator;
Sunil Roy, TEE tutor for World Vision;
Paul Baroi, pastor of a Baptist church.



Bangladeshi Bachelor of Theology students 1997, with books presented to them from the Scottish Baptist Book Project.

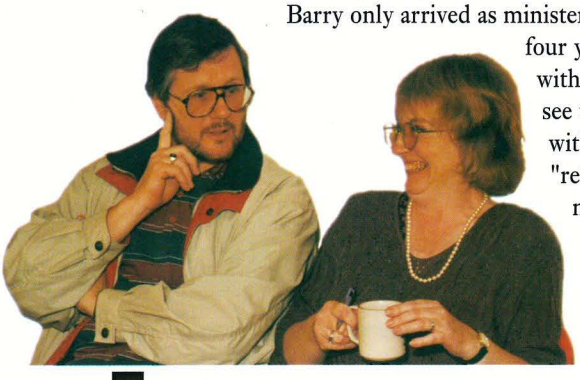
BMS News

Mission on the streets of London

JAN KENDALL REPORTS HOW ONE CHURCH IS FACING UP TO THE CHALLENGE OF THE WORLD ON ITS DOORSTEP.

Take 50,000 people from a wealth of different ethnic backgrounds living within a mile of your church and try to tell them that the message and person of Jesus Christ is relevant to them in their everyday lives - that's what Barry Cheesman and his team are seeking to do at Ilford High Road Baptist Church.

Barry only arrived as minister at Ilford High Road four years ago, but he came with a burning desire to see the city of London with what he calls "relevant and significant ministry". Three months after he arrived his church formulated a mission statement which begins by stating: "We are committed to ensuring that mission (incorporating both evangelism and social action) is at the forefront of church life."



Ilford High Road Baptist Church is the only one of four big churches in Ilford still functioning in its size and purpose. The old neon sign reading "Have faith in God" was taken down and replaced with "Jesus lives". It's a multicultural neighbourhood, with people from Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe. God could have meant Allah or Shiva. The sign needed to be Christ-focused to differentiate this building from the Hindu temple, the gurdwara or the mosque down the road.

With a membership of just 92 as well as Barry, the church employs four other staff members, all of whom work in the community. "We're only small, but we've embraced the challenge of mission," says Barry. "We've committed ourselves to serve the community. You can do a lot with a little when you've got committed people. In my opinion churches make a mistake in getting other pastoral staff instead of getting guys out there on the street. You need mission not just in word, but also in deed."

Two of the four staff members are a married couple, Simon and Ursula Standen, who have come to the church from Interserve. They run an English language school on the church premises, to which an average of 15 ladies attend each

Left: Barry Cheesman and Jan Kendall Right column: People participating in the church workshops

week. It's an ongoing programme, which is aimed at the level the women are at. The fee is a modest 50p a lesson, which makes it affordable for the women, many of whom are paying for the course themselves. Some of the women have been in the UK 25 to 30 years and never learned English; others have just arrived. They all need help with knowing what to say in shops, and telling the doctor what is wrong with their sick child. Simon (who is the only man allowed to teach in the classes) and Ursula visit the ladies in their homes systematically, and also prayerwalk the area every year.

These classes have now been running for three years. Early on a Chinese lady came to faith, and there are now two other ladies regularly attending Sunday worship. Barry comments: "I see it as a long-term operation. We need to infiltrate the community with love and prayer. I envisage seeing something cross over once we've been going five years."

Across the road from the church is The Pegasus Centre, a building also owned by the church and at the moment leased out by them. It's one of the locations used for the Barnabas Workshops which is a scheme funded by several of the local churches together to provide training to help people find work. The manager is Peter Lickfold, who took early retirement from his personnel and training job at Haringey Council and now works three days a week there. People are notified about the Barnabas Workshops by personal visit at their home from Peter and his team; they are given a reply card to fill in, which has a freepost address. The success rate is good; 40 per cent go on to find a job; 30 per cent go in to vocational training.

"In Barnabas Workshops we believe we're sharing the love and heart of Christ" says Barry. "We're concentrating on South Ilford because we want to do something about the area. People consistently say that although the material is similar to that given by job centres they are treated differently and made to feel they are individuals. We give them individual help with their CVs and job applications."

The list of other projects that Ilford High Road Baptist Church is involved in in the community is mind-boggling. On the church premises itself there's Young Inspirations, an after school child care programme for 29 children. There's a Lunch Club that also takes place on church premises once a month; a Night Shelter one night a week in winter offering meals for 30 and sleeping accommodation for 18 people; Sunnyside Contact Centre acting as an access centre for families experiencing breakdown and needing a neutral place to meet; and PlayGroup, which has now been running for 25 years. "They're all run by committed Christians," says Barry, "though we'll use other helpers. The fees aren't high. It's a ministry."

Many give their time and energies to these projects for free. The LBA gave to Barnabas as did the BU initiative "Against the Stream" which gave £1,000. But everything is done on a shoe string. Young Inspirations received a £30,000 grant for its work.

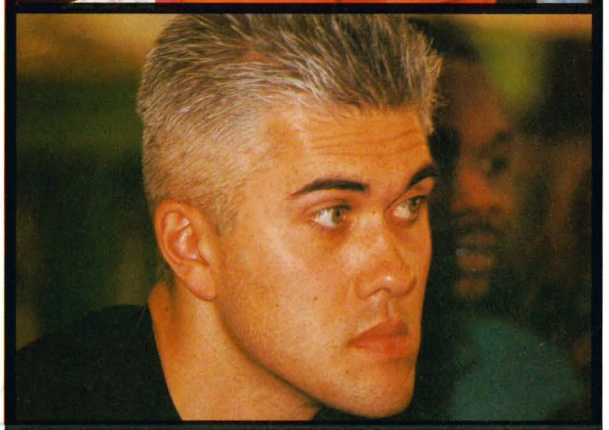
Barry admits he's not the archetypal Baptist minister. "I spend a lot of my time managing staff, and networking with people on the Council" he says. "So I don't do the traditional roles associated with being a Pastor." He does in fact have a team of people in the church who undertake the pastoral work.

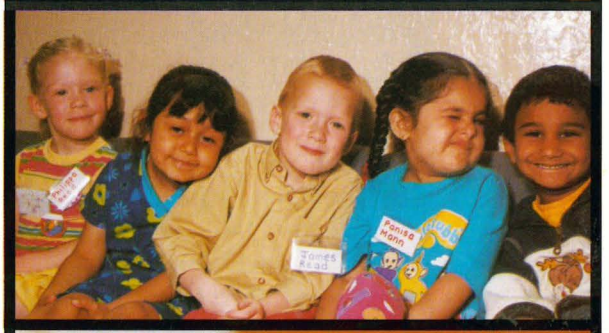
"We've committed ourselves to serve the community"

In fact he's just been invited by a major funding consortium from the local area to be part of a local unemployment initiative. "I think this must mean our programmes have a lot of credibility," he says. "It'll be very time-consuming, but winning credibility is very important, because largely the Church is seen as irrelevant."

There's so much happening that the church is considering taking the Pegasus Centre back. They have hired a Christian consultant who is looking objectively at where they go from here. They're likely to undertake a new five year development plan.

All of their publicity carries the words from Mark 11:17 "My house will be called a house of prayer for the people of all nations." Certainly the members of Ilford High Road Baptist Church are investing both love and prayer in making this a reality. ●





WHERE NEW HOPE IS MORE THAN A PIPE DREAM

CHRIS BELL SPENT A SABBATICAL IN NORTHERN THAILAND. THERE HE VISITED A CHRISTIAN PROGRAMME FOR DRUG DETOXIFICATION AND REHABILITATION.

I stayed in the hills of northern Thailand, which together with the hills of neighbouring Myanmar (formerly Burma) and Laos, form the "Golden Triangle" area, known for its large scale opium harvests. Today, opium production in Thailand has reduced significantly through government enterprises and missionaries helping villagers to substitute agricultural cash crops in place of their opium fields. Unfortunately this has not happened over the borders, and so recently narcotics - mainly heroin - have seeped back into the hill tribes. One government survey revealed that there were 426 narcotic addicts (almost all heroin) in nine small villages in this district; amounting to 12 per cent of the combined villages' population.

While I was in Thailand, the Bangkok Post reported that the production of opium in the country had been reduced from 140 tonnes to around 18 tonnes. But Laos still produces 200 plus tonnes and Myanmar 2,500 tonnes, and as general agricultural techniques have developed worldwide, so opium production has "improved". Opium plants can now be harvested three times a year instead of once a year, and opium poppies can be grown with three flowers (and hence three pods) on the same stem, instead of one. This means the potential yield from the same amount of land may be multiplied by an alarming factor of nine.

One man told me that he had been taking opium for 35 years, another for ten years, and one young person for three years. Some men told me that they considered they were addicts because opium was part of their lifestyle from when they were babies. Mothers gave it as the traditional medicine, and smoked it in a pipe as they carried their infants around on their backs. As a social custom, men would gather for an evening of socialising, during which they smoked opium together.

The Thai government has attempted to provide some remedial programmes for addicts within the hill communities, including localised community treatment and detoxification facilities. But it is very disturbing to learn that around 95 per cent of their clients return to their addictions after completing the programme, sometimes within a few days.

Could a Christian response be formulated with any greater lasting effect?

To assume a detoxified person has been cured is a myth. Detoxification satisfies the bio-chemical changes a person's system must endure, but it has little to do with their remaining drug-free. People must learn to cope psychologically without drugs. The Christian approach is very holistic. Teaching, training and programmes of positive action begin their slow work of transforming goals, aims, ambitions in life as well as removing guilt complexes. Addicts must learn to turn to other forces, powers or influences to achieve a consistent drug-free life. The real hope of these programmes is not only that the participants leave their drug taking habit

behind, but that they actually commit themselves to Christ. I was told by many people that relying on willpower was not enough; the factor which brought success was their relying on the power of Christ.

A christian three year project for detoxification and rehabilitation for hill tribe addicts began in 1992 at Baw Gauw "House of New Hope", and in 1993 at Ban Cham Luang. Later, as more money came in, the Thai Tribal Narcotics Detoxification and Rehabilitation Project began in 1996, continuing the work already started and creating new centres at Ban Huey Pha and Ban Heuy Kia Pa. This new project is partly administered by the Karen Baptist Convention.

The main features of the programme include:

- a detoxification and treatment period using medicinal herbal techniques
- a disciplined and timetabled schedule of rehabilitation activities, which include a distinct Christian emphasis

"One man told me that he had been taking opium for 35 years. . ."

- a welfare programme directed towards families of programme members. A total of 52 sacks of rice have been distributed to 33 families over four years
- a rehabilitation loan fund. Once a participant has graduated from the programme, there is the possibility that they are eligible for a loan to get them started with making a living. Loans have been made for fertilisers, plants and establishing pig and chicken production.

Once recovered addicts have graduated there is on-going concern for their welfare. They are visited at home, and they themselves visit the Centres. They attend an annual Renewal and Recommitment seminar which lasts two days. Six recovered addicts have undertaken Bible School studies at the Karen Baptist Centre, two of whom have completed their three year course, and two are now on the staff of the Centres.

Compared to the results of the government programme, the results of the christian programme are pretty impressive. Out of the 165 addicts who began the programme at Baw Gaow, 102 completed it and 47 have remained drug-free. At Cham Luang 115 out of 126 completed the programme, and 85 remain drug-free. At Heuy Pha all 25 completed the programme and 16 are drug-free and at Heuy Kia Pha 18 out of 39 completed the programme and 16 remain drug-free. That means 63 per cent remain drug-free.

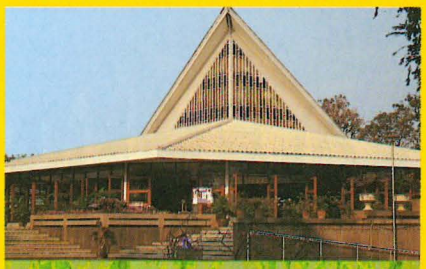
Of the 191 who didn't make it, five died of AIDS, two committed suicide, one was murdered, one overdosed and 21 were arrested and imprisoned.

A few years ago the churches did not have a very hospitable attitude to addicts. Responses seem to have been one of judgement or denial ("It doesn't happen in our village.") But as pastors and churches saw members of their own village communities or even their own congregations involved in addiction they agreed they must help in the work. The Church began to develop new attitudes and to see that it needed to "rediscover its role to be a healing and caring community". Perhaps through new attitudes expressed, the churches in Thailand are trying to live out their responsibilities in new and meaningful ways in the nitty-gritty of life.

Chris Bell is minister of Atherton Baptist Church, Manchester.

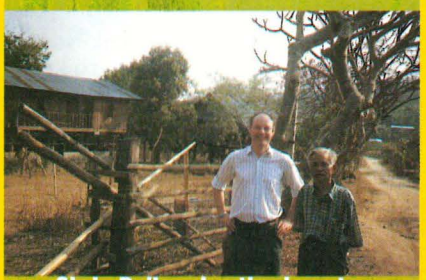
Daily Rehabilitation Schedule

7.00 - 7.45 Breakfast (Programme members preparing, serving, washing up etc)
8.00 - 10.00 Spiritual Emphasis Unit - Bible Teaching, Christian morals, values, ethics
10.00 - 12.00 Practical agricultural teaching relating to soils, crop production, conservation farming, livestock and poultry rearing
12.00 - 1.00 Lunch (again prepared by programme members)
1.00 - 4.00 Further agricultural demonstrations and production field work
4.00 - 6.00 Rest and recreation
6.00 - 7.00 Dinner
7.00 - 8.00 Spiritual Emphasis Unit, including worship
8.00 - 10.00 Free time/lights out



Chiang Mai International Church

Cham Luang Detoxification Unit



Chris Bell and retired pastor

AP Photo/Eraldo Peres

REJOICING IN HEAVEN

BAPTISTS IN RIO DE JANEIRO ARE THINKING "MISSION" IN A BIG WAY. **JAN KENDALL** REPORTS.

Think evangelism in Brazil, and you could well think "street children". Whilst a lot of Brazilian Conventions and churches are focusing their attention on the plight of these children, others are exploring new ways to bring the gospel to ordinary people. Rio is one such city.

The Carioca Convention in Rio de Janeiro has an amazing programme of outreach in all directions. One of their special projects is evangelism at the Rio Carnival. Traditionally Baptist churches have run away - literally - from having anything to do with Carnival. They have taken their members away on spiritual retreats. Because what started life as part of the Roman Catholic calendar, the beginning of Lent, has given rise to one big orgy. It is reckoned that more adultery is committed in the four days of Carnival than in the rest of the year put together. But under the leadership of the Executive Secretary Revd Belardim Pimentel, the Carioca Convention has begun to think that it should be not be hiding away, but should be using the Rio Carnival, the largest Carnival held in any city, as an opportunity for evangelism.

> "The first group dress up as clowns, and in this way hope to reach the many children that gather on the streets."

The Carioca Convention has what are called "urban missionaries" on its staff. One of these is Jorge Luiz Rodrigues Pinheiro. Jorge takes a leading role in the Rio Carnival outreach. Together with a team of 150 specially chosen (mostly) young people, who have to be baptised members of Baptist churches and bring with them a letter of recommendation from their pastor, Jorge co-ordinates three different areas of evangelism.

The first group dress up as clowns, and in this way hope to reach the many children that gather on

the streets. The second group make for the place where the parades are forming; here they engage in direct evangelism. A third group are available to give medical assistance. In such a crowded event a lot of people feel unwell, get dehydrated, drink too much alcohol or don't eat. But even the fainting don't escape being evangelised!

Special literature is prepared for the Carnival. At what is a very false time for people one tract is called "Behind the mask"; another "Ripping up your fancy dress". One such tract was given out to a woman who took it home, read it, and turned up in a Baptist church the following Sunday with her whole family. They were all subsequently converted.

Erivaldo is a 16-year-old boy whose

" .... took it home, read it, and turned up in a Baptist church the following Sunday with her whole family."

The Carnival Team on the streets

Revd Belardim Pimentel

father had recently died. He missed his father a lot, and was unhappy at home. On Carnival night he left home and walked out amongst the thousands of people, hoping to forget his problems. He met the Special Projects team who listened to him and introduced him to Jesus. Today he is attending the First Baptist Church in Rio.

The team of helpers grow spiritually too; many are young Christians, and to do what they do takes a lot of courage. At the end of the time of Carnival they are strengthened and renewed in their faith; they come to see if they can testify in such an immoral situation, they can testify anywhere.

At other times of the year Jorge, a former professional footballer, spends his time as a missionary teaching football to young lads who, otherwise, would not have anything to do, and therefore would probably be involved in drugs.

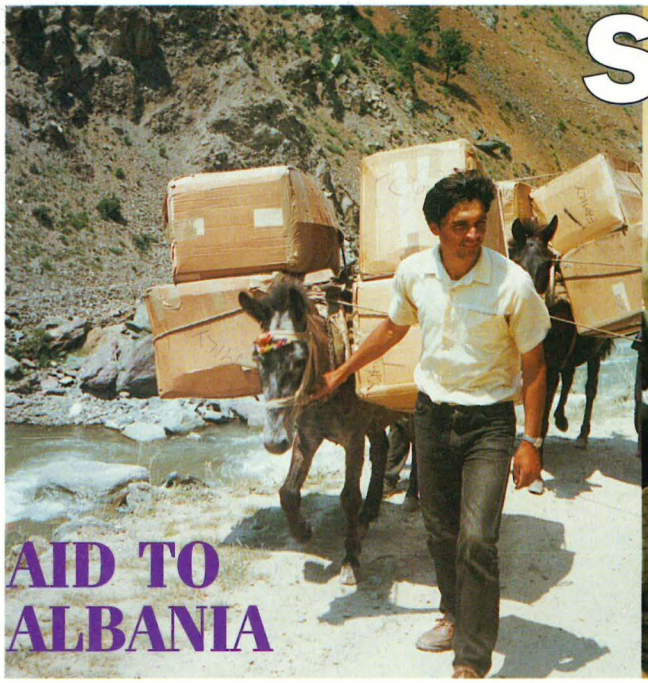
The Carioca Convention is also involved in outreach in hospitals, prisons, ports and docks, social action, church planting, working amongst people who work on ships and international aircraft, tourists, the bereaved, the deaf and dumb, students, and people looking for lost relatives. They have also opened up churches as chapels of rest for the poor to bring their dead relatives, so that family members can have a place to visit them.

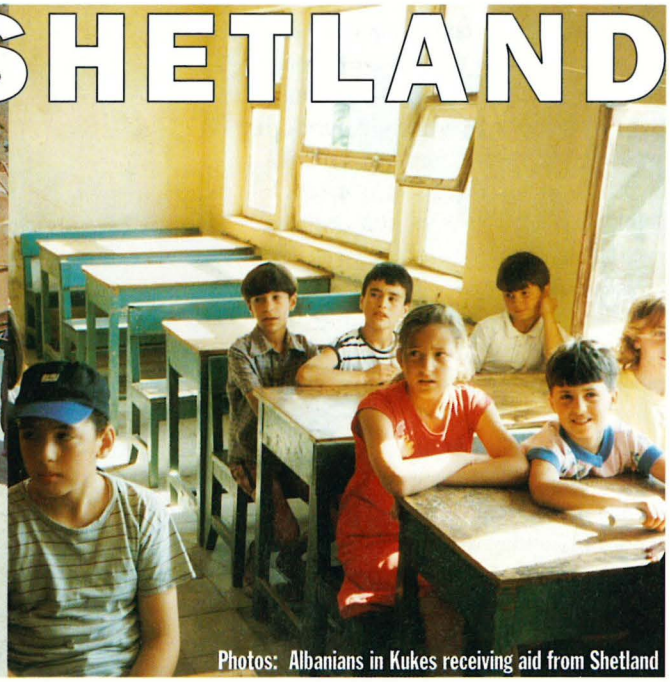
It's all stirring stuff. But says Revd Pimentel "We are trying to return what we were able to receive 115 years ago when the first missionaries came, and the gospel came to our country."

Jorge Pinheiro and BMS missionary David Brown

The Carnival Team

SHETLAND AID TO ALBANIA





Photos: Albanians in Kukes receiving aid from Shetland

RUBY POTTINGER TELLS OF THIS INITIATIVE FROM HER NATIVE ISLE

An aid convoy was first sent out to Albania from Shetland in March 1992. Two of the drivers, on seeing the desperate conditions under which the Albanians were living, felt compelled to do more to help. So, the Shetland Aid Trust was established in April 1992 and registered as a Scottish charity in September of that year.

It's a 3,800 mile round trip from Shetland to Albania and since then, five convoys of aid have made it to the country. On the last three occasions they went to Kukes – a very poor mountainous area in the north east, consisting of the main town of Kukes with a population of about 23,000 and the surrounding district of about 70,000 people.

One 390 bed hospital serves this whole area and it was the poor condition of this hospital that prompted us to make it our main project for further trips. To date we have delivered 122 new windows, 250 beds and mattresses, theatre operating trolleys, lighting, anaesthetic machines, various hospital equipment and furnishings, nurses uniforms, antiseptics, and medicines.

The extremely impoverished state of the schools has also been of concern to us and many excellent contacts have been made. We have distributed four tons of books, maps, desks, black boards, typewriters, teaching aids for Chemistry, Biology, Art and PE.

Our third objective of providing clothing and bedding to many of the people living up in the mountain villages in conditions of abject poverty, has been very rewarding. On each trip we have taken out approximately seven tons of clothing, foot wear and bedding for these families.

The trustees were also happy to be able to provide food and clothing for the crew of the Darius – a large Lithuanian factory ship which had engine failure off the west coast of Shetland and had to be towed into Lerwick harbour. Shetland Aid Trust provided food and clothing for the 150 crew members for about six months and also had the joy of seeing many of them attending evangelical churches in Lerwick. We were able to hold a service on board ship which was attended by about 80 per cent of the crew.

> "…. Please pray for the Albanians"

During the latter part of 1996 we were called upon by Edinburgh Direct Aid and the International Red Cross to supply clothing for the people of Bosnia and Rwanda in their emergency situations.

The serious problem in 1997 within Albania caused us to look elsewhere and the Trust were glad to help out Edinburgh Direct Aid in their repatriation programme for the refugees returning to Bosnia.

As this article is being prepared, plans are underway to get another convoy out to Kukes in May 1998, providing we can get assurance of safe transit within Albania. An Albanian christian friend writes:

"It is so hard to see even Christians become desperate and lose their hope… I hope and pray you will be able to come to Albania as the need here is really great… please pray for the Albanians, that they may be able to see with their spiritual eyes the glorious hope offered to us in Christ". ●

Ruby Pottinger is married to one of the aid convoy drivers.

MISSION

DRY BUT NOT THIRSTY!

THE CHRISTIAN YOUNG PEOPLE OF SHETLAND NEEDED A PLACE TO MEET IN A SAFE ENVIRONMENT — BOTH ALCOHOL AND DRUG FREE

David McQueen TELLS HOW DA DRY DOCK WAS BORN.

In November 1997 a new kind of pub opened in Shetland – a dry one. A group which is now called Christian Action on Addiction (CAA) was set up four or five years previously to help people in the community with alcohol or drug problems or to help their partners or families.

This led on to a support group which now meets once a week in a separate room within the bar premises.

And finally last November Da Dry Dock, an alcohol-free bar was born. It serves a wide range of non-alcoholic drinks and cocktails on six nights a week (7.00pm to 11.00pm and 1.00 am on Fridays) to 17 year-olds and over.

Bar meals and snacks are on offer every evening, and there's also satellite TV, pool table, darts room, quiz nights, live bands, pool competitions as well as family and food theme nights.

The aim of Da Dry Dock is to provide a friendly environment where people can relax and socialise, where a safe alternative to alcohol is provided, alongside practical christian love and caring in the local community. Each evening there is also a trained counsellor available.

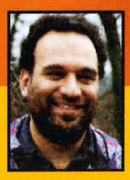
The ultimate hope and aim of this venture is to introduce people to Christ and then to bring them to a fellowship within an established church.

Da Dry Dock is run completely by 50 volunteers from a wide variety of churches throughout Shetland. They all give up their time to staff the bar each evening.

Over the last few months it has been apparent that there was a big need for a place for the local young christians to meet, and it has proved popular with them. There's also been some interest from the non christian community but it takes some time to build up good relationships and trust with people.

It's been really encouraging to see people helped by the support group, and moving on to volunteer to work in the bar. We hope that little signs of hope like these will continue, and that Da Dry Dock will become an oasis in the community here in Shetland. ●

David McQueen is Manager of Da Dry Dock alcohol free bar.



Mike Pilavachi

What is Mission ?

In the Acts of the Apostles, we see two models of mission. On the one hand, there is Paul with his travelling evangelistic and church planting team and on the other, the mission of the local church within it's local area, its 'Jerusalem'. The temptation is to see 'mission' as the travelling evangelist or special event and the work of the local church to pastor and nurture those who have been converted through the 'event'.

Thankfully we are moving to more holistic models of mission. We see mission as integrating proclamation evangelism and lifestyle evangelism. Mission consists of the words we speak and the lives we live. This is where the local church comes into its own.

There are many advantages to the evangelistic mission; one of the negatives is that it can be a hit-and-run event. It is in the context of the church, rooted in the local community, that our lives can be examined to confirm that they match up to our words. It is here that the world can judge whether we are really Jesus' disciples by the way that we love one another. In Acts 2, we see one of the most productive evangelistic rallies of all time. The pre-publicity was brief and punchy and at the end of the talk, 3,000 men responded and immediately the guy in charge of homegroups had a headache!

With such success you should have thought the disciples would have voted for a repeat performance the next day. Instead they "devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and to the fellowship, the breaking of bread and to prayer. All the believers were together and had everything in common". 'Every day they continued to meet together'. What happened? They became Church. They became rooted. They lived out the gospel day by day. What was the result? "The Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved".

In evangelism, it is not a case of either/or, but both/and. The work of the local church and the national and international evangelists must go hand in hand if we are to reach our nation in an authentic way with the good news. ●

Mike Pilavachi heads up the Soul Survivor team and pastors a congregation in Watford specially aimed at reaching young people.

Da Dry Dock Bar

Mission as a

CHRIS POPE EXPLAINS HOW FOR RAY AVENT MISSION HAS BECOME A WAY OF LIFE.

Ray Avent's had a change of heart. Physically he has just had a triple by-pass, yet spiritually he received a new one when committing his life to Jesus at 15. Travelling home after a challenging Bible class holiday, Ray remembers thinking, "If this is this good for me, I've got to make it a priority". With a new heart came a new outlook on life - that mission should be seen as a way of life. And mission became a way of life on return to the villages around Chipping Sodbury, with the other young people of these villages comprising his mission field. Within a few years, along with others of like passion and vision, Ray was helping to lead worship in local villages in addition to running regular youth outreach evenings.

Ray himself names several crucial factors in these early and formative years which enabled "mission as a way of life" to truly be his way of life.

First, there was the mentoring role provided by Dr Arthur Casson, his local Bible class leader. It was 'Doc' who provided much of the faithful Bible teaching, encouragement and a living role model which helped Ray and others grow. Such was the impact of this that he cites the same things as essential within the area of providing opportunities for others. What three things can we most give people? (1) encouragement, even in the midst of failure; (2) time to be in touch - people are more important than meetings; and (3) living a life which is a continual reminder that by 'embracing the trustworthy promises of the future, you enhance the here and now'.

Significant too was the attitude of the older generations. "The more mature Christians obviously had the vision to let us do what we were doing," exclaims Ray. "They allowed us to share in worship which was very precious to them, and often the highlight of their week". Reflecting appreciatively on the positive criticism and invaluable practical care which enabled him to live mission as a way of life he continues, "Whether we did get on the wrong side of some of the senior Christians I don't know. But if we did, they never let us know and they certainly didn't stop what we were doing!".

Significant too was the attitude of the older generations "The more mature Christians obviously had the vision to let us do what we were doing

Finally, despite the work going from strength to strength, village to village, with firm links being built with monthly outreach meetings in Bristol held by the Torchbearers from Capenwray Hall, their emphasis remained firmly on Kingdom building - not building an empire! While there was always support for people who were new Christians, it was a common scenario for Ray and others to begin a work and to let the established version be taken over by a local minister or church. For Ray, it was

Left:: Ray Avent introducing Princess Diana to wedding guests at Taunton
Far left: Ray, working with a group of children
Right: Ray with Dorian Prior Sankey posing for local TV - fools for Christ?

way of LIFE

more important that people found Jesus, than which church they went to afterwards.

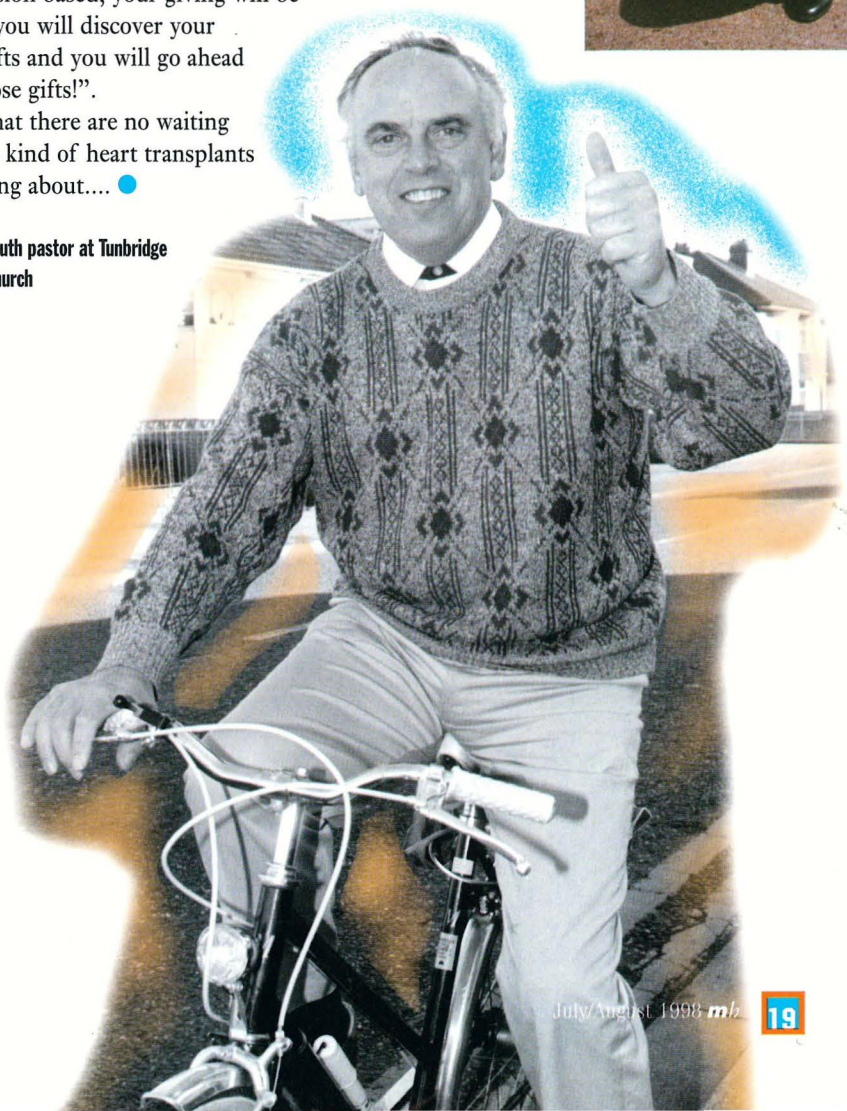
And such truths are still refreshingly present in Ray's current position of Pastor at Union Church, Heathfield, especially the latter. When referring to a planned 'Churches Together in Heathfield' mission this autumn, he states matter of factly, "If at the end no-one extra came to Union, but all the Anglican churches were packed out, I would have no problem with that!". Yet there is still plenty afoot at Union Church including amongst other things an intriguing planned outreach to non-church men entitled, 'Men Behaving Admirably!'. Another exciting aspect of church life already in place is the Window On the World (WOW) club, developed by the BMS. "It is a mission club", says Ray proudly, "with an aim of encouraging and interesting children and young people in the world wide church.... and the God at the heart of his church". Plans are already afoot to develop another layer for slightly younger children, such has been its success.

And what about the time in between? Yet more opportunities to live mission as a way of life, first in management training and then as a regional manager although this was far from obvious at first. "Suddenly my Christian work became evenings and weekends and I found it hard" he openly admits, "but over time I came to see that if mission is really to be a way of life, then mission had to be the place I was working". It became so and in the process a productive learning ground where Ray learned much which would prepare him for his future calling as a Pastor.

I asked Ray to sum up why he would want others to see mission as a way of life. His answer? That it is the best way of unlocking the full potential within every Christian. "If your whole life is a mission... your prayer will be based on the right things, your outreach/witness will be mission based, your giving will be sacrificial, you will discover your ministry gifts and you will go ahead and use those gifts!".

I hear that there are no waiting lists for the kind of heart transplants Ray is talking about....

Chris Pope is Youth pastor at Tunbridge Wells Baptist Church

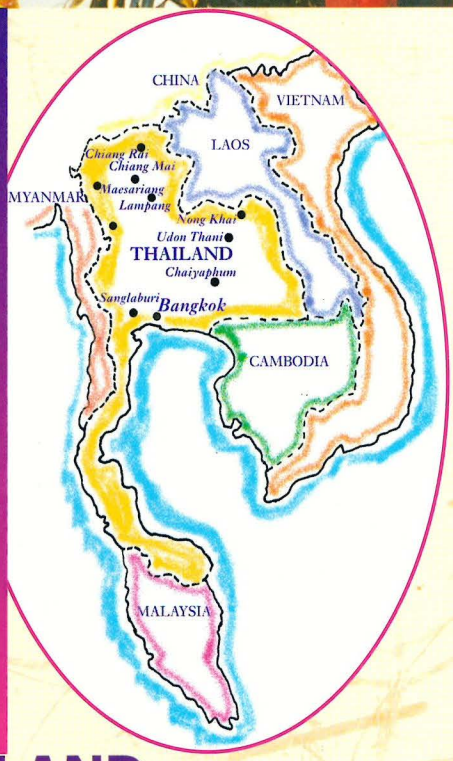


Chiang Mai

A SERIES EDITED BY **JAN KENDALL** THAT LOOKS AT TOWNS AND CITIES AROUND THE WORLD WHERE BMS PERSONNEL ARE WORKING

by Jacqui Wells

Our Town



THAILAND

Bin and Da at The House of Love - their mothers have both died

INTRODUCTION

Chiang Mai literally means "new city", and this in itself seems a bit strange because in 1996 the city celebrated its 700th anniversary.

Chiang Mai is Thailand's second city and it is also known as the "rose of the north". It's a really beautiful city. Thais enjoy living there, and are very proud of it. Tourists come from all over the world to see its beauty.

HISTORY

Chiang Mai was founded in 1296 by King Mengrai and became the capital of a loose alliance of northern city states known as Lanna Thai (kingdom of a million ricefields). Chiang Mai flourished as a major religious and trading centre until 1556 when a Burmese invasion reduced it to a vassal state. The Burmese were expelled in 1785, and Lanna Thai again became part of northern Thailand.

Until the 1920s Chiang Mai remained isolated from Bangkok, and could be reached only by a difficult river trip or an elephant-back journey that took several weeks. Such isolation accounts for Chiang Mai's charm and beauty today.

Today as you wander around "old Chiang Mai" you can still see the remnants of the old city walls near the moat.

Chiang Mai is full of Buddhist temples, some of which date from the late 1200s and early 1300s.

Wat Doi Suthep is Chiang Mai's most important and visible landmark, and overlooks the city from its forested mountain backdrop some 3,520 feet above sea level. The temple dates from 1383.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

- the sunlight glistening on the golden pagodas in the Buddhist temples
- the colour and splendour of all the flowers which are everywhere
- the moat and wall over 700 years old
- the traffic - it actually moves. Quite a surprise after Bangkok!
- the sellers of delicious Thai food and Chinese noodles in competition with Kentucky Fried Chicken, Pizza Hut, and McDonalds
- the outstanding beauty of the northern Thai women and their wonderful smiles
- strawberries and peaches to be enjoyed

Left and right : Night bazaars in Chiang Mai
Below: Children at the House of Love

in the winter months

- some of the best golf courses in the country - a golfer's delight!
- shopping malls which would give Oxford Street a run for its money
- artisans and craftsmen producing beautiful pieces of art and craft
- and so much more!

TOURISM

Hundreds of thousands of tourists come to Chiang Mai every year. They come to experience and appreciate the beauty of Chiang Mai, and to shop in the famous Night Bazaar. Chiang Mai is a shopper's paradise. You can buy virtually everything here: beautiful silk, carved wooden ornaments and screens, celadon pottery, silver jewellery, leather goods, hand-drawn pictures, paintings and water colours and oils, parasols, wooden toys, clothing.

However, you will need to learn the art of bargaining and enjoy the fun of bidding for the gift you want to buy!

FESTIVALS

Festivals are an important part of Thai life, and Chiang Mai celebrates one festival - or even two - every month. The festivals may have a religious, cultural, agricultural or local significance. Perhaps the three festivals that are the most popular are:

❶ THE CHIANG MAI FLOWER FESTIVAL

This usually takes place in the first week of February. I've stood for three hours on the Nawarat bridge watching the wonderful procession pass by: marching bands, dancers, vintage cars, northern Thai folk wearing the exquisite northern Thai costumes and dress, and of course, the magnificent floral floats with the beauty queens.

❷ SONGKRAN (Traditional Thai New Year)

Songkran is celebrated in April when the moon is full. The whole city becomes full of life and excitement. Songkran could be called the water festival: the religious part of the festival sees the Thai Buddhists making merit as they sprinkle water on revered Buddhist images and as they construct sand pagodas in the temple courtyards. Songkran is also important for family life as the younger members of the family pay their respects to their elders by pouring fragrant water

Working on handicrafts at the New Life Centre, Chiang Mai

Chiang Mai

over their hands and as they seek their blessings. This is a very beautiful ceremony. But Songkran can also be described as "Songkram" which means WAR. During the four day holiday there is a huge water fight on the streets of Chiang Mai. If you are brave enough you can walk about and enjoy the fun, joining in the water throwing. Or you can drive around the city and see truck loads of young people or families throwing water, and if you forget to lock your car, you may find a bucket of water has been thrown into it!

❸ LOI KRATHONG
(Festival of Lights)

In November, again at the time of full moon, the Thai people celebrate Loi Krathong. They float (loi) a candlelit floral offering (krathong) down the rivers or canals. In effect as they do this they believe they are showing their respect to the water spirits and they are also asking the spirits for forgiveness for their wrong doings. There are literally thousands of krathongs floating down the Ping River in Chiang Mai. It's really a beautiful sight. However, we know that forgiveness of sin does not come from water spirits but from Jesus alone.

Students from the 'Centre for the Uplift of the Hilltribes' - The Karen Bible School

RELIGION

Most Thais are Buddhists and Buddhism is very important to Thai society. To be Thai is to be Buddhist. The Thai people in Chiang Mai worship as Buddhists. In the early morning they have the opportunity to make merit by giving alms (and food) as the monks walk barefooted holding their bowls along all the streets

in Chiang Mai. On special holy days some of the people of Chiang Mai go to the temple bearing gifts for the monks. Again they are seeking to make merit. There is also a time of private worship/meditation in the temple in front of an image of Buddha, with burning of incense sticks, lighting of candles, the offering of lotus blossoms and prayer. The people of Chiang Mai, like all the people of Thailand, are outwardly very religious. For many, the teachings and example of Buddha shape their lives.

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

The Christian Church in Chiang Mai is alive and well, and it is growing! However Christians would number less than one per cent of the overall population. But the Lord is using his Church to bring blessing and hope to the people of Chiang Mai.

CHRISTIAN WORK

❶ NEW LIFE CENTRE

There's quite an infamous saying about people visiting Chiang Mai. It goes something like this: "If you ever visit Chiang Mai, you must go to Doi Suthep temple and make merit; eat khaw sooy, a wonderful chicken and noodle dish; and then visit a brothel!" Prostitution is a huge problem, and the Church is doing very definite and positive things to combat it.

The New Life Centres have been in operation now for 11 years - there are three in Chiang Mai and one in Chiang Rai. The NLCs are a "home" for hill tribe girls, many of whom are in great moral danger of being sold into prostitution. Most of the girls have had no opportunity to study, so at 15 or 16 they begin their education. According to their academic ability the girls will complete primary or secondary education. Then they go on to study at Commercial College, Bible School, University or they will opt for some kind of vocational training. As they study in the evening, during the day they learn various kinds of handicrafts. The NLC helps over 180 young women. Some are definitely saved from being sold into prostitution, and some have been rescued from brothels and given the opportunity to start a new life.

❷ THE HOUSE OF LOVE

The House of Love was started in 1995 by TBMF missionary Ms Kim Brown. It was established to help women and children suffering with HIV and AIDS. The incidence of HIV/AIDS in Chiang Mai and district is extremely high, and the House of Love is there just to help a few of them! The House of Love is a hospice where young women and little children come to live and die. Some are referred from the NLCs because they are showing symptoms of full-blown AIDS. Others come by way of the Government's Social Welfare Department.

There are 16 residents at the House of Love; eight are children ranging in age from three months to 14 years. The others are between the ages of 17 and 26. Kim, who heads up this project, says: "Pray that in the midst of the brokenness and death, we will be able to share God's love with others and continue to celebrate the hope and love of life everlasting that is a gift to us from God. Pray also that those at the House of Love who do not yet know Jesus will come to accept his love and salvation for their lives."

Kim and the children at the House of Love

New Life Centre, Chiang Mai, Worship Service led by NLC chaplain

PROFILE: NAWTAK

Her story is a common one among tribal women in Northern Thailand. As a teenager she was sold into prostitution, forced to leave her village home to work in a brothel in Bangkok. By the age of 17 she had been diagnosed with HIV, the virus that leads to AIDS.

Now 21, she is one of 16 residents at the House of Love in Chiang Mai.

❸ THE CENTRE FOR THE UPLIFT OF THE HILLTRIBES (CUHT)

The title is another name for the Karen Bible School, where around 45 young people, aged from 17 to 29, are training for the christian ministry. They are now studying over four years and their studies will equip them to work in the churches in the north of Thailand. Some will become pastors, others will become evangelists; others will work with women; some will go on to be workers with young people or children. ●

Below left: Margaret, one of The House of Love staff members

Bin, 3 years old and HIV positive. His mother died this year

The Democratic Republic of CONGO

Plans for the Bateke women's leadership seminar at Bwantaba were going ahead. All the village groups were aware and preparing to send their delegates. Mama Nsele, the District women's president in Kinshasa, a short, sturdy woman, had prepared a programme of varied sessions with her colleagues, Mama Botende, vice-president, and Mama Monga, secretary, both tall and imposing women.

On the plateau itself Mama Mumfwa, the women's leader at Mbankana, on her own initiative had summoned others to discuss what each village should contribute in the way of manioc, pondu, chickens and fish. Slight of build, but knowing her own mind, she was a potential leader for the whole area. The seminar could enhance that potential. Her husband, Albert, an out-of-work nurse, had been recruited to a medical team tracking sleeping-sickness in the villages.

One important question however, which concerned Mama Mumfwa, and to which no-one knew the precise answer, was how long it would be before she gave birth to Number Four? Well on in her pregnancy, her term would be reached about the time of the seminar. This could be awkward. If she delivered beforehand she would miss the seminar. A birth during the seminar would be likely to stop the show, such an event being of intrinsically greater interest than a discussion of leadership skills. The ideal scenario would be a delay until after the seminar, but how long had she to go?

The eve of the seminar saw Mama Nsele and team, evangelist Mputu and ourselves taking the long, winding road up and across the plateau. The Mai-Ndombe bridge still being out of action, the diversion led by a slow, bumpy road to where the turbulent waters of first the Bombo and then the Lumene river were crossed by low, wooden bridges. In spite of the discomfort and one or two anxious moments, we reached Bwantaba at nightfall in good humour, having shed the cares of the big city.

> "If she delivered beforehand she would miss the seminar."

Very few women had arrived from other villages, just three from Mbankana. Mama Mumfwa had not yet given birth, they said, but as Papa Albert had gone to Kinshasa with the medical team, she'd had to stay and look after Numbers One, Two and Three - Jeremiah, Jonah and Adonijah, "Ado" for short. A pity. It had to be hoped that Albert would soon return.

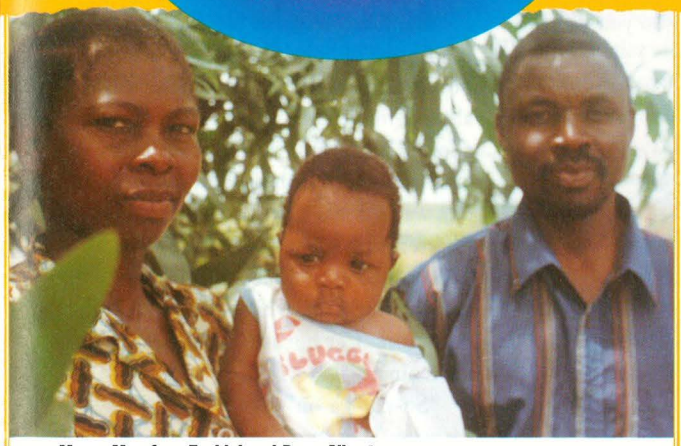
After supper six women arrived from Ngwene, having walked the five miles from the main road. Their range of educational backgrounds was typical. Mama Momponga, their leader, had had no schooling. In her day girls didn't go to school. Agnes, on the other hand, had benefited from a full secondary education. Although no women had arrived from Kinzono, Nsuni or Bombo-Lumene, the seven from Bwantaba itself would bring the total to a worthwhile number.

At seven o'clock next morning, the programme got under way - prayers, breakfast, Bible study, two main sessions, lunch, siesta, two more sessions and supper. Collapse exhausted! The younger women took notes. Others could not so much as read a line of Scripture. Mama Momponga's eyes never left the speaker's

Mama Nsele leading a session at Bwantala

How long ?

. . . she had gone into labour and had the baby at the side of the road



Mama Mumfwa, Ezekiel and Papa Albert

face, and she nodded her agreement. Still no sign of Mama Mumfwa or other delegates, and so it was to be for the next two days.

In spite of a rainstorm or two and minor crises of food or water, the women present gained new insights into their role in the home, in society and in the church. They found new strength of purpose in the bond that developed between them and with the Kinshasa leaders. Each group reported on their activities or lack of the same, and resolved to do things differently in future.

A joyous Sunday morning service, led by the Kinshasa women, with Mama Nsele preaching on, "Go, tell!" brought the seminar to a suitable close. In the afternoon Deanna drove the Mbankana women home, and learned that Mama Mumfwa had given birth to a boy early that morning. On her way to the medical centre with her mother she had gone into labour and had the baby at the side of the road. Her mother had done the necessary, wrapped the infant in a cloth and helped her home. Albert had not yet returned from Kinshasa.

On the Monday the plan was to take the Kinshasa women to the Mai Ndombe, where they would cross by canoe and get transport home. On the way we dropped the Ngwene women at their village. They immediately rushed to their fields to get manioc, aubergines, peppers and tomatoes, which were stuffed into the bags of Mama Nsele and co as tokens of their appreciation. Finally they crossed the fast-flowing river without incident and began to negotiate with the driver of a taxi-bus. We waved farewell and returned to Bwantaba.

Only next day did we get to visit Mama Mumfwa. Looking bright as a button she was proudly feeding Number Four, whom, in Albert's prolonged absence, she had named Ezekiel. "Another prophet!" exclaimed Mputu. Mama Mumfwa, however, turned pensive. "How long will it be before the next seminar?" she asked,"for those of us who missed out. In two months time the baby will have grown....." Ah, Mama Mumfwa! How long? "We shall have to start thinking about that," we said. ●

Kitchen Team at Bwantala

Travel Travails of a

BMS VOLUNTEER **DONALD FOSTER** RECALLS HOW HE GOT LOST AND NEARLY MET THE PRIME MINISTER OF BANGLADESH

By way of experimentation, I thought a baby taxi ride to the Sonargaon Hotel would be an easy start for me to get used to the Bangladesh traffic system. It is after all the largest and poshest hotel and I am a Westerner. That was my big mistake – I should have read Sue Headlam's well written note. It said Sonargaon Hotel – Kowran Bazaar.

A man stood by his vehicle and looked at me in horror as I said in my best, newly-acquired Bangla English – "Son-ar-ga-on". I got the message he was not going to take me. Perhaps he's broken down and waiting for the AA, I thought.

There were lots of empty taxis passing by so I watched the professionals. Then, taking the plunge, I stepped out into the middle of the road with my hand waving downwards. As I opened my eyes, I realised a friendly gentleman with a black beard and whitish/grey muslim fez hat was talking to me as he sat back at the controls of his machine. Proud of my ability to understand some limited conversation, I correctly assumed he was saying, "Get in. Where do you want to go?".

A man stood by his vehicle and looked at me in horror as I said in my best, newly-acquired Bangla English – "Son-ar-ga-on".

"Son-ar-ga-on" I repeated several times, wondering why he looked so puzzled.

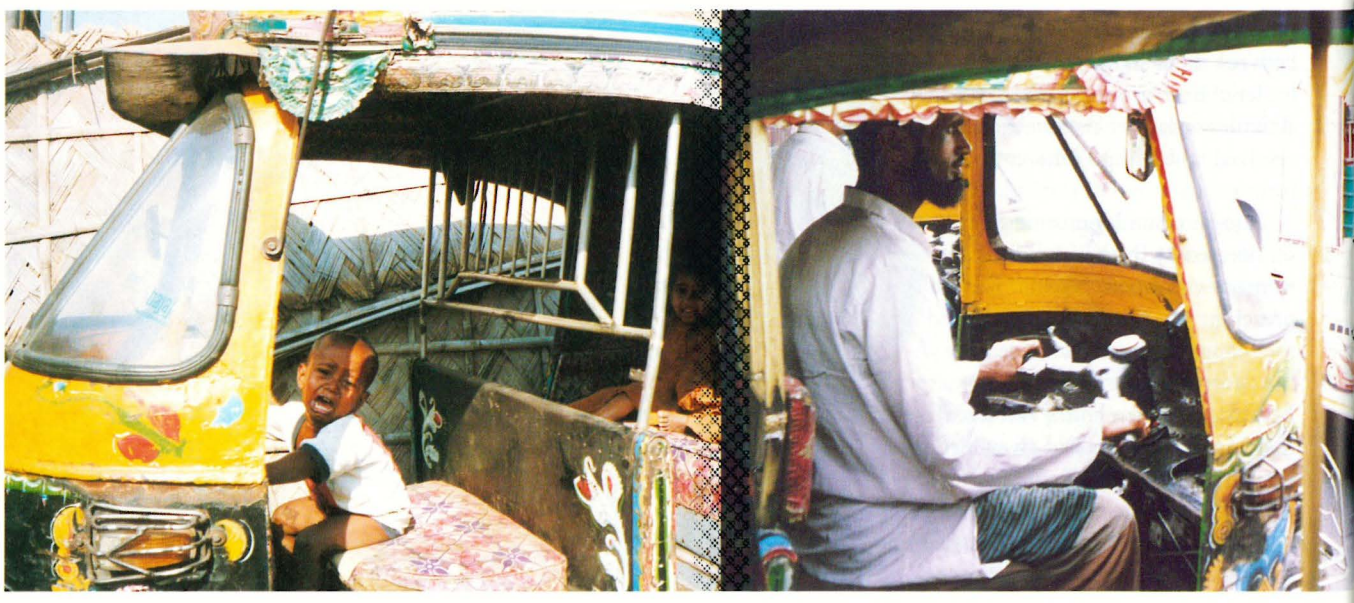
"Two hundred Taka!" was the eventual response. Sue had written, "about Tk 70". I remembered that.

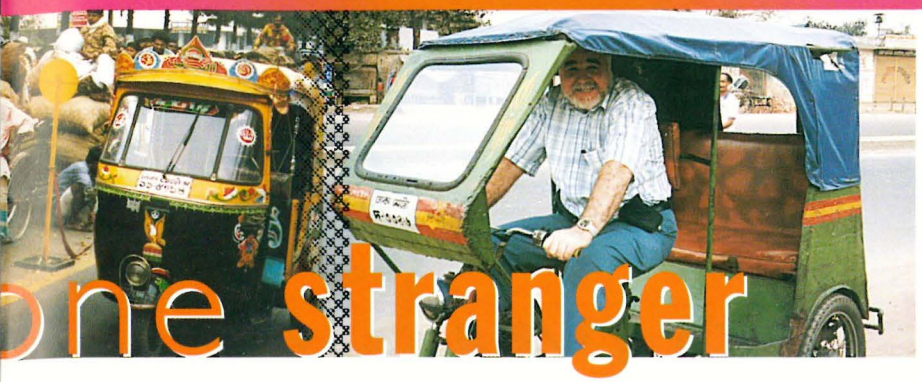
"Seventy Taka!" I said very convincingly with that knowing, gentle smile that meant, "I know the real price". I quickly changed it to, "OK. One hundred Taka" in a rather frightened voice at the force of his reaction. A shrug of the shoulders, he was affable again and set off in a southerly direction.

The ride was great fun for the first hour or so. I knew the baby taxi would be slower than the BMS vehicle. I had also been told that rickshaws were not allowed on certain roads. Wasn't this a kind of Reliant Robin? Perhaps it's just a one way system – but there were 20 different ways it seemed as we approached a roundabout. The driver veered in and out whilst I choked on the pollution. Car horns blew, the noise was deafening.

"So-nar-ga-on" I kept repeating, realising I was nowhere near my destination. By now we were firmly wedged between numerous vehicles of all types, in a jam with engines switched off. I had a strong feeling a two kilometre journey should not have taken two hours and apart from that, where was the nearest loo?

Not renowned for panic in such situations and forcefully repeating the





one stranger

destination required, he nodded, shrugged his shoulders and pointed to a huge crowd of people. I took that to mean, "It's over there".

"It's a strike" I said to myself with my prayer life improving every second. I remembered Sue had told me to stay indoors and "keep well out of the way". Just then I realised that the men in the shirts and white hats were policemen.

A colleague was called over and limited English conversation started: "English?" he asked. Having to confess that I was, a discussion ensued between them. It was clear they were not going to let me through the crowd. Another baby taxi drew alongside. "Very far – another kilometre" the policeman said.

I had ended up near the river in Sadharghat, a district of Old Dhaka. The kind policeman gave my new driver instructions. The road was remarkably quiet of traffic but people were everywhere. Suddenly, a flare of sirens. Police vehicles and pick up trucks containing people with guns hurtled by. I kept my camera down. Perhaps it's a strike and they are going to deal with it. A big car whooshed past with the Bangla flag on the bonnet followed by more vehicles.

Within seconds we were in traffic again and our own high speed progress (for a baby taxi) slowed to normal. I was rather glad that even this driver did not take me to the Sonargaon Hotel, but to the Sheraton. In the Sheraton, I knew exactly where the toilets were.

Now I read Sue's note very carefully. It would have helped if I had pronounced 'S' as 'Sh' and in any case, I should have asked for 'Kowran Bazaar' or even something similar. Next week I'm going on a river cruise on my day off. I have already warned my host that I may be a week late for dinner. ●

I had a strong feeling a two kilometre journey should not have taken two hours and apart from that, where was the nearest loo?

Where are they now?

...Hannah Clark

ACTION TEAM - ITALY 1992

Before going out to Italy with BMS in 1992, Hannah Clark had promised herself never to follow her mother into teaching. But her experiences of that extraordinary year changed all that.

"It was really the two-month tour we did in churches and schools on our return to Britain that made me begin to question God on what he had in mind for my future. I thoroughly enjoyed all the nerve-racking time of our work out in Italy – especially the time spent with classes..."

But Hannah already had a place to study English at Lancaster: "Being a member of the close-knit Italy team increased my confidence, and I settled into life at university quickly. My faith in God had also grown and I made a real effort to make this clear to others from the start."

By the end of her first year, Hannah was Treasurer of the Christian Union and playing her flute in the music group.

Summer au-pairing was something of a disaster ("The one thing which kept me sane was my visits to the local evangelical church"), but a chance meeting in the mountains resulted in a transfer to help teach English in an Italian school.

At this point Hannah surrendered, and signed up for postgraduate teacher training at Warwick University going on to join the staff of a primary school in Northamptonshire, where she discovered that the Chair of Governors shares her passion for the language and culture of Italy. ●

Prayer *focus*

EUROPE

Saverio and Betsy Guarna: Tirana, Albania

Italian born Saverio and Betsy have been involved in church planting in Albania since 1992. When asked about the current situation in Albania, Saverio, a former Secretary of Evangelism and President of the Italian Baptist Union said:

"When I was asked about prayer requests for Albania, my mind jumped back to the wonderful Easter worship service held in the main auditorium of the Tirana Pyramid on Easter Sunday afternoon. All the Evangelical churches of Tirana were present, there must have been more than 1,000 people filling the ground floor and the three balconies; 80 per cent of them were young people. It was a true celebration of Jesus' resurrection, a testimony of how God can change the hearts of people and how this change brings joy and peace to the new life in him.

There are many problems and terrible suffering continues; the future seems black, one can almost touch the hopelessness in the lives of these people, they are discouraged and pessimistic. We have never before felt such a widespread desire in the Albanians to emigrate from their country.

Against this background and even more today, we realise and appreciate God's loving and patient work in the hearts of the young people in our churches. Please pray for them; they are the hope and the future for a new Albania.

Please pray:

- **for the Christians who have stood firm in their faith and continued the running of the churches when all expatriate personnel were evacuated; thank God for these people and pray for his strength**
- **for calm and peace to return to Albania and for the news of the hope that new life in Jesus brings to be spread widely**
- **that God, by his Spirit, would bring an end to the cycle of hatred and violence, allowing the people of Albania to move on and rebuild their lives**
- **for Saverio, Betsy and all christian workers in the country, that God would lift and sustain their spirits and bless their work**

Wendy and Wayne Hadley: St Etienne, France

The Hadleys have been in France since December 1995, first learning the language and now involved in church work. Much of that work is evangelistic and the spring and summer months tend to be especially busy. Sometimes the local churches join together in initiatives or teams from the UK travel to France to work with Wayne and Wendy. Easter saw one such group of ten young people from the Hadleys home church in Sutton Coldfield who were involved in a week of street evangelism. More street evangelism took place in early May with an almost 30 strong team from Baptist churches in the Rhone Alps region of France. That team handed out lots of literature, sang and performed drama and the Hadleys say that whilst fruit from such events is often hard to see at first in France, at the evening events there were people present who had never been to an evangelical service before (many French people still view Protestants with suspicion).

A more recent event was held during the World Cup. A mini football tournament was a highlight for those in the city between 14 and 21 June. It was organised by the St Etienne church and featured teams from Ambassadors in Sport UK, Christians in Sport from St Etienne and Valence and many other secular teams. During this period the six evangelical churches of St Etienne joined together to support one anothers initiatives and also to support the work of Christians in Sport at their events, handing out water to thirsty visitors as well as evangelistic literature designed especially for the World Cup. As Wayne puts it, they were "giving the message to as many as will come to St Etienne... that there is life after football...er, I mean, after death!" BMS gave a grant of £1,500 for the pur-

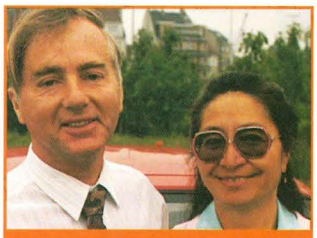
Around the world

News from BMS colleagues and partners around the world to complement the BMS Prayer Guide

£1,500 for the purchase of evangelistic literature to be used at this and similar events throughout the country.

Please pray:

- **for those who heard the gospel at all of these events, that God would move their hearts to respond**
- **for good follow up and support in the local churches**
- **that the Lord would break down the barriers of mistrust in those who do not usually have dealings with Protestant churches**



Stuart and Joyce Filby: Bredene, Belgium

The Filbys pastor a church which began in their home and has now moved out to rented accommodation in the town. There have been recent encouragements with some people giving their lives to the Lord and others being baptised, but there are also many struggles. Stuart and Joyce write:

"Our church numbers have dropped recently because many folk must now work on a Sunday... Our Sunday school numbers have also decreased and we would value your prayers for them that we might receive a couple who have a heart for this work among children. We have, over the months, also lost several key workers... It is not that they have found somewhere else to go but simply that they find it difficult to commit themselves to their fellow Christians. During the last months, we have become so aware of the many Belgian Christians who stay at home having had, in the past, disagreements in their churches and who are not prepared to put things right. No amount of reasoning with them seems to be able to change this attitude. One couple said to me that they had gone from church to church in the last 18 months, looking for a church that "fits them"! I told them that they would never find one but they should seek themselves to "fit in and adapt" to a church. We haven't seen them since! We have met pastors, musicians, youth leaders etc, all sitting at home whilst the church cries out for such people to help and return."

Please pray:

- **that the Lord would encourage Stuart, Joyce and their church in the good things and give them strength to deal with the battles**
- **for workers to come forward to help - particularly a couple for the Sunday school**
- **for the new Christians - that they would grow quickly and not be discouraged**
- **for a spirit of reconciliation amongst the Belgian Christians who no longer attend a church**

Prayer focus

AFRICA

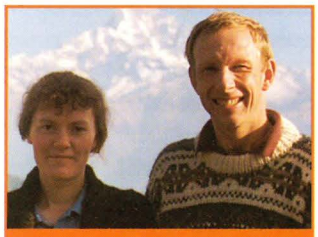
Margot Bafende: Mbanza Ngungu, Democratic Republic of Congo

Margot officially retired from service with the BMS at the end of April, returning home to Mbanza Ngungu with her Congolese husband Augustin in mid May. Margot has faithfully served as a teacher in Congo with BMS since 1959, originally in Mbanza Ngungu then Ngombe Lutete and Kinshasa, returning to Mbanza Ngungu in 1987 as lecturer at the ISP teacher training college. She will probably do a small amount of teaching there for a while but much of Margot's time will continue to be taken up with her work at the Kola church involved in evangelism, teaching, youth and children's work and so on. It won't all be work though – after an introduction during her last Home Assignment, Margot is hoping to teach the ladies at the church how to line dance!

Please pray:

- **that the Lord would continue to guide Margot and Augustin in this next stage of their lives. It has been said that Christians never really retire.**
- **pray that Margot would relax and enjoy a hopefully slower pace of life now and that the Lord would support those taking on her work**

ASIA

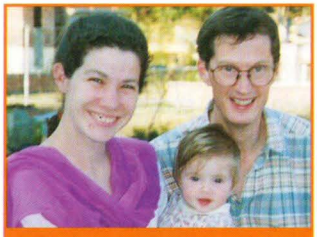


Karen and Peter Lloyd: Pokhara, Nepal

Barnabas Project volunteers, Peter and Karen, returned to the UK at the end of May after nine months in Pokhara. During that time Peter has enjoyed teaching the children of missionary workers at a primary school in Pokhara and Karen has seen progress in her work. Before their return home Karen temporarily took over as line manager of a Workcentre offering vocational training to former leprosy sufferers, helping to rehabilitate them into the community. During her time in post, one of the large hotels in Pokhara showed an interest in selling some of the handicrafts produced by her clients. She and others are keen to look at ways of expanding the retail outlet but also remembering that clients with leprosy-affected hands can only work slowly. Peter hopes to do some supply teaching from June and returns to teach at St Faith's school in Alcester in September, but Karen's future is currently unknown. They say: "It has been a very special time here during which we have been very aware of God's presence and grace towards us. People keep asking where this experience will lead us. At the moment we don't know, but pray that we will be open to God's leading and guiding to take us on to what he has for us."

Please pray:

- **for a quick and easy readjustment to life in the UK – not always easy**
- **that the Lord would open doors for Karen, showing her clearly what he wants her to do next**



Katrina and Martin Butterworth: Butwal, Nepal

Martin feels he is making gradual progress helping his Nepali colleagues at Nepal Hydro and Electric to react to increasing customer requirements for quality assurance – a somewhat alien concept. In his post as Quality Manager, Martin has had to handle many personnel problems which he was not expecting and problems with the language make life difficult, but things are moving on.

Work at the clinic, which Katrina began with another doctor, is increasing and most days there are more people than they can see. Most are very poor people who cannot afford any other medical services. She has also begun working each Friday with the Family Planning Association of Nepal and is hoping to build contacts with other medical professionals locally and encourage them to develop caring services. Katrina's Nepali language skills are developing well and at Easter she gave a 30 minute presentation in Nepali as part of the church service.

Please pray:

- **for good health for Martin, Katrina and baby Ruth**
- **for continued progress in Martin's difficult job and for a greater understanding of how the culture he works in operates**
- **wisdom for Martin in dealing with difficult personnel issues**
- **progress with the language for both but particularly for Martin to communicate well with his colleagues**

mh asks some UK Baptist ministers: Should churches go it alone in mission?

YES

My church is very involved with sending medical teams to Chandraghona, Bangladesh in liaison with BMS plus, directly supporting two local churches in Romania and sending teams; also supporting BMS PIPs project.

The hands on, practical experience and exposure to the work gained by people being directly involved pays dividends which could not be gained simply supporting others on the field. It's not always right though and agencies provide a professional channel.

Steve Ibbotson, Sharing Life, Leeds

YES AND NO

Yes – Very often a church can send people on a non traditional basis when their area of work might not be readily accepted by a traditional historical missionary organisation. The church may make a judgement about a person but the 'experts' may have a limited view of the type of work that person can be involved in.

No – Few churches have the resources to fully support a person or people. Also, gone are the days when you simply pack a bag and go – considerable expertise is needed which a professional grouping may have.

Gerry Barlow, Waterside, Southampton

If a local church feels they can commit to a foreign mission project - yes, by all means. However, this could only, in my opinion, be supplementary to supporting mission organisations.

Colin MacKenzie, Bellshill BC, Scotland

Usually not. Many mission agencies have a HUGE history of developing skills in cross cultural issues which local churches do not and you need an understanding of those issues to work effectively. Also, longer term projects tend to have better results and local churches, for many reasons such as changing leadership, cannot maintain that long term focus. However, there are sometimes issues with a project which mean a mission agency will not touch it, rightly or wrongly; then a short term commitment from a church can help.

Steve Gaukroger, Gold Hill BC, Bucks

NO

Certainly not! We would be foolhardy to ignore the wealth of experience built up over many years and the cross cultural expertise in particular. But I believe the responsibility to identify the calling of an individual is primarily with the local church so it's a partnership — hopefully a mutually beneficial one.

Adrian Prior, Creech St Michael, Somerset

If a missionary is relying on one church for support, their resources are limited and circumstances may change, leaving them high and dry. For that reason it's better for at least a group or area of churches to offer support.

Leslie Edge, Moss Park, Glasgow

There can be a duplication of work if workers are not co-ordinated. Going it alone leads to a spirit of independence rather than working alongside others with expertise and there can be a lack of accountability when working alone. Churches going it alone often have enthusiasts who are not necessarily skilled or trained. Also, belonging to an umbrella organisation which has credibility overseas gives support to the worker and protection to fall back on if things go wrong. Partnership is more important than individuality.

Richard Crippen, Bloxham BC, Oxon

Probably not unless there is no other way to get missionaries to unreached people groups in the countries concerned. Going it alone may well pander to the egos of church empire-builders but usually the mission societies do it all better anyway. Leave it to the professionals!

Michael I Bochenski, St Albans

ACTION POINTS

1 Examine how much of your church's life is mission and how much is maintenance. Have you got the proportions as you would like them to be?

2 If you have not already got one, ask your church members and leadership to write a mission statement for your church. Give yourself short-term and long-term measurable goals and don't forget to take stock every now and again to see how you're doing.

3 Break this mission statement down for every area of church life, so that everyone can review where they are as against where they should be.

4 See that these goals are reflected in your church's annual report and other literature.

5 What are the factors preventing us being more mission minded?

CUT & DETATCH

TAKE 2

Take 2
a resource for church leaders & workers

RESOURCES *for leaders*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I was interested to read Philip's article "The way I see it" (Jan/Feb ***mh***). It would have reflected the situation 20 years ago fairly faithfully. However things have changed rapidly.

BRITISH BAPTISTS AGAINST THE USE OF MODERN MUSIC IN WORSHIP

If I was to quote from certain letters in recent correspondence in the Baptist Times, it would be quite easy to justify the above headline. I don't think it would fairly represent the British scene! Likewise the use of a letter to embody Brazilian Baptist opinion can distort reality. Philip Clements-Jewery's perspective is about 20 years out of date.

Brazilian Baptists continue to give urgency and importance to evangelism; however, a holistic view of the gospel is now an integral part of their ministry.

It is unfortunate that Philip's article appeared at the beginning of 1998. This is the year that Brazilian Baptists have declared as the "Year of Social Action". There is even an official hymn for the year. (Do we do anything quite as prophetic in our own hymnal?)

WHAT AM I DOING IF I AM A CHRISTIAN?
IF CHRIST HAS GIVEN ME COMPLETE PARDON?
THERE ARE MANY POOR WITHOUT A HOME OR FOOD.
MY CHRIST CAME TO REDEEM US,
THE WHOLE MAN, WITHOUT DIVISION.
NOT JUST THE SOUL FROM EVIL TO SAVE,
BUT ALSO THE BODY TO RESTORE.

THERE IS MUCH HUNGER IN MY LAND,
SO MANY UNHAPPY PEOPLE!
THERE ARE LITTLE CHILDREN THAT ARE GOING TO DIE,
SO MANY ELDERLY LEFT TO SUFFER!
MILLIONS DO NOT KNOW HOW TO WRITE,
MILLIONS OF EYES DO NOT KNOW HOW TO READ,
THEY LIVE IN DARKNESS, UNAWARE
THAT THEY ARE SLAVES TO OTHER MEN.

According to World Vision information, one Baptist church in four has a social action project linked to it: an orphanage, a school, a home for the elderly etc. Most State Conventions have a social action board. Our own State Convention has a hospital, a 3,000 pupil school and is building a centre for abandoned children. Many of our churches have their own social action projects.

John Clark
Fortaleza
Brazil

First, I would like to say "thank you" to all those who responded to an earlier letter of mine requesting surplus copies of the Baptist Hymn Book. I believe about eight barrels of books have been sent to Jamaica as a result, and more are still being offered. A response well beyond my expectations.

My second concern follows on from this good response. As well as hymn books, the churches of Jamaica also need Bibles, and I have received a request to see if Baptists in this country would be willing to help meet this need in Jamaica. The request is for any Bibles in reasonable condition, but the preference is for the Authorised Version (ideally in a reasonably large print. Eye care is not what it is here!) or for RSV or NIV versions.

The Revd Clifford Taylor of Rye Lane, Peckham is willing once again to act as the co-ordinator for sending Bibles to Jamaica. He can be contacted on: 0171 639 4286.

Ted Hale
Northampton

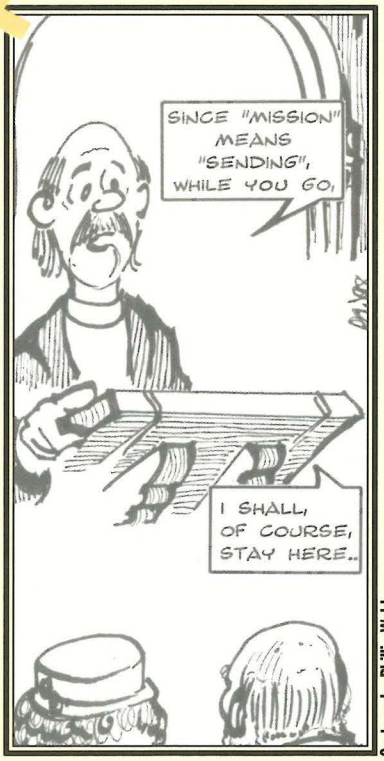
LARGER THAN LIFE

Excerpt from a recent prayer letter from BMS personnel:

"We've had lots of departures from our Butwal team in the last year. Long before someone goes, Nepali friends, acquaintances and strangers come to the house to ask to buy or be given things, and it's customary to let the house worker (Didi) choose what she wants first. A missionary family in Kathmandu asked their didi what she wanted from their things, and after some thought the only thing she asked for were the husband's false teeth. "But Didi," they protested, as they tried to put her off, "they wouldn't even fit you."

"Ah," she said, "but they do!"

Mr Tim Lehane and Mrs Alison Maclean
Nepal



Cartoon by Philip Webb

CUT & DETATCH

The WAY I SEE IT

ANOTHER EXTRACT FROM THE (WHOLLY IMAGINARY) PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE OF **PHILIP CLEMENTS–JEWERY**

DEAR PHILIP

I hear that you joined the Jubilee 2000 human chain at the G8 Summit of world leaders in Birmingham on 16 May. I believe that this was some sort of demonstration calling for the debts of some poorer countries to be cancelled. I have to say that I'm not sure whether or not I approve. I've been reading some of the previous extracts from your correspondence and I have to agree with those people who say that for Christians to get involved in social and political action is an unnecessary distraction from their main task. The really urgent issue for Christians is to preach the gospel. Can you persuade me otherwise?

Yours sincerely

Tom.

DEAR TOM

Thank you for your letter. I hope I don't have to go over again the reasons why preaching the gospel and social and political action are not opposed to one another, but rather go side by side in the one mission of God which we are called to share. Actually, I believe the demonstration at Birmingham in May was in the great tradition of biblical prophetic protest against injustice. The point is, that the debt burden is crippling poorer countries. It is the poorest and most vulnerable people who suffer as resources are taken from health, education and development to pay off the debt. We are talking about saving lives here. It's no more and no less than a simple matter of justice.

Yours in Christ

Philip.

DEAR PHILIP

I'm still not convinced that cancelling debts is right. It only encourages irresponsibility on the part of the governments of those countries. And what about the wastage as vast fortunes are creamed off into the anonymous Swiss bank accounts of Third World dictators? The wrong isn't all on one side you know.

Yours

Tom.

DEAR TOM

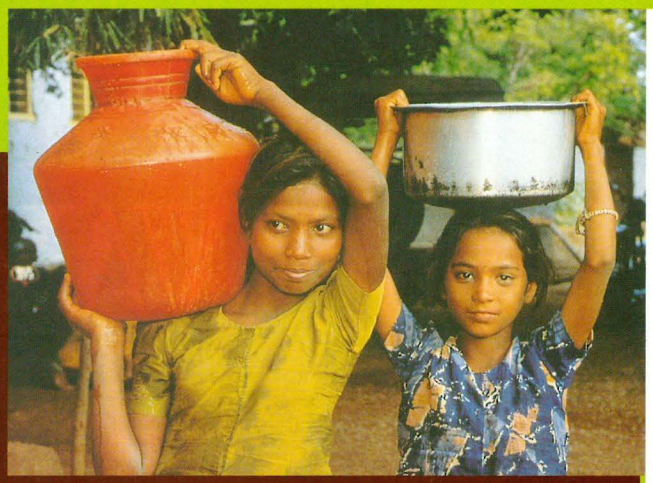
Actually, those Third World countries were actively encouraged back in the 70s to borrow money from the West. If there was any irresponsibility, it belonged to the leaders as well as the debtors. And Europe enjoys its present prosperity because of massive debt relief after the Second World War, so why should we deny to others the same thing from which we have benefited? Above all, isn't the forgiveness of debt at the very heart of our biblical faith, whether it be financial debt as in the book of Deuteronomy, or spiritual debt in the case of our relationship to God? The campaign for debt relief is simply asking that others be treated in the same way as God has treated us. I hope you now see why I believe it was important to have been there in Birmingham in May.

In Christ Philip.

What do you think? Take part in this debate. Write to us in about 120 words:
BMS, Baptist House, 129 Broadway, Didcot, Oxon, OX11 8XA or email: herald@bms.org.uk

Action Card

Water Works



How's your access to taps and toilets? "A personal question" you may respond, and you would be correct. The availability of these two vital facilities is quite literally a matter of life or death to each one of us.

In recent years, the numbers of people enjoying clean water has steadily risen. By 1994, three quarters of the world's people were benefitting from safe water, up from 61 per cent just four years earlier. This is a remarkable achievement, but during the same period, the proportion of people who had a sanitary means of excreta disposal declined from a poor 36 per cent to an even poorer 34 per cent. The recent cholera epidemic in Peru and outbreaks of bubonic and pneumonic plague in India are three well highlighted examples of illness resulting from the lack of good sanitation. Diarrhoea thrives in the absence of hygienic conditions and kills 2.2 million children each year.

It has been reported that expenditure on sanitation in poorer countries declined when they found their budgets stretched thin from making payments on enormous international loans. Hopefully, the current calls for debt relief for poorer countries by the year 2000 will have some effect. In the meantime many communities are being helped to help themselves. One such as this is in Nepal which has one of the highest maternity mortality rates in the world – 12 children in every 100 die before they reach one year old.

The United Mission to Nepal works with local people who, recognising the inter-relatedness of health problems, place great importance on building clean water systems and latrines and promoting literacy and immunisation, resulting in significant reductions in mortality rates.

Please send this month's card with a message of support to: UMN Clean Water and Sanitation Programmes, c/o Jen Marston, Health Service Office, United Mission to Nepal, PO Box 126, Kathmandu, Nepal ●

BMS, Baptist Union, Church of Scotland, Methodist Church, United Reformed Church.

ABY Project Barnabas

The Alliance of Baptist Youth is running an initiative aimed at linking up BMS Action Teams with people who are interested in following their progress through the year and in writing to these young people while they are away from home.

Letters from the UK are an important lifeline for these young people, many of whom are leaving home for the first time and going into some very unusual situations. It's a great support for them to know that people back home are thinking of them and praying for them.

If you would like to be a part of this initiative, write to: Paul Brownnutt, ABY Project Barnabas, c/o Sam Gibson, BMS, PO Box 49, Baptist House, Didcot, OX11 8XA or email three@bits.bris.ac.uk

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Checkout

Missionary Movements

JULY

Arrivals

Angus and Carol MacNeill from Sangklaburi, Thailand

Corinna Woods from Dullu, Nepal

Neil and Ruth Abbott from Clermont Ferrand, France

Robert and Catherine Atkins from Toulouse, France

Wayne and Wendy Hadley from La Talaudiére, France

Phil and Rosemary Halliday from Massy, France

Gwen Hunter from Kimpese, Democratic Republic of Congo

Departures

26 June to 14 July

David Martin to South Africa for the BWA Council

Paul and Hilary Drinkwater to Kathmandu, Nepal

Neil and Ruth Abbott to Clermont Ferrand, France

Robert and Catherine Atkins to Toulouse, France

Wayne and Wendy Hadley to La Talaudière, France

Phil and Rosemary Halliday to Massy, France

AUGUST

Arrivals

Chris and Sarah Mattock from Carlentini, Italy

Mark and Claire Ord from Genova, Italy

Mike and Daveen Wilson from Mossoro, Brazil

John and Lidia Pullin from Campo Grande, Brazil

Departures

Sheila Samuels to Delhi

John and Maria Dyer to Santa Catarina, Brazil

Mark and Suzana Greenwood to Fortaleza, Brazil

Mark and Claire Ord to Genova, Italy

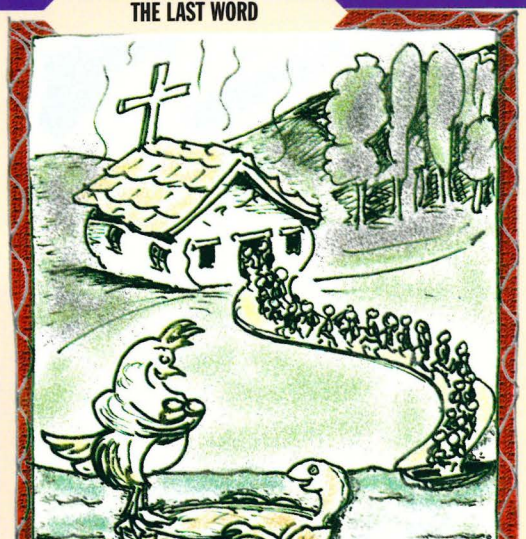

ILLUSTRATION BY ROBERT SEWARD

The Last Word

GERRY MYHILL

Gerry Myhill is a BMS missionary working in Antonina, Brazil

One of our favourite stopping places on our visits was Dona Freda's in Porto Rico, a small riverside town, on the banks of the River Parana. Dona Freda always seemed to know when we were going to arrive and would have fresh bread baked and a meal ready.

One day we found her very upset as her pet tortoise had gone missing. This wasn't too difficult to imagine as she had a large vegetable garden with lots of lettuce and cabbage patches. Also a large orchard full of orange and mango trees, grape vines, as well as other exotic fruits. The tortoise could have been anywhere in the garden quite happily munching away, and not a bit bothered about being lost.

After searching for a while we noticed that a broody hen, sitting on a clutch of eggs, was scolding away to herself and looking very unsettled about something. Sure enough, there was the tortoise, having re-arranged the eggs to make room for himself, and happily thinking that he had found the perfect place to hibernate!

I remember as well the time when the people from the islands on the River Parana were being forced to leave once more as the flood waters invaded their land and houses; the nearest port with high land being Porto Rico, where as it happened, we worked and had a church building.

Many of the people brought with them the animals and birds that they were able to rescue. Many had family or friends to stay with; others camped along the side of the roads and grazed their livestock on the verges. At the Baptist Church we took in four families, each with an average of six children bawling, seven dogs a-barking, eight ducks a-quacking, nine chickens clucking, and a parrot on a perch!

Each family took up a corner of the building for their sleeping quarters and the centre served as a general communal-cum-cooking area, with an open wood fire on a pile of bricks providing the heat for a ring of pots and pans.

I said that we wouldn't hold services while they were there, but the visitors insisted that it was an excellent opportunity for them to participate in services they couldn't normally get to. We therefore had services with people sitting in rows under the gaslight, while the chickens were jostling for space along the backs of the pews and the cats and dogs disputed space underneath. Mothers were bathing and feeding babies; others were cleaning fish and preparing food.

> "...Many of the people brought with them the animals and birds that they were able to rescue."

The overall atmosphere was one of joy and celebration with everybody singing and participating in what were truly family services.

One evening we were well in to the service and the smells coming from the pots and pans were enough to make your mouth water. At this stage there were noticeably less chickens jostling for space on the pew backs, much to the cleaner's relief!

I was preaching and thought I was doing pretty well, so well that I was considering taking notes on myself, and was busy waving my arms about a bit to emphasise different points. The people were animated which all helped toward my self illusion. Alas, it wasn't my message that was causing the animation, but plates being filled with food and passed around. It wasn't long before a plate was slapped into my outflung hand by one of the ladies with the words:

"There Pastor, all this preaching is hungry work. Tuck into that!" Perhaps one way of shutting up the preacher when the time has been forgotten! ●

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19 SEPTEMBER	PLYMOUTH	01823 698977	**1 OCTOBER**	LEEDS	01274 487341
22 SEPTEMBER	SOUTHAMPTON	01823 698977	**2 OCTOBER**	EDINBURGH	0141 775 1201
23 SEPTEMBER	LONDON	0171 639 8717	**3 OCTOBER**	GLASGOW	0141 775 1201
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Tickets and more information can be obtained from your local BMS Co-ordinator telephone numbers listed above, or call head office on 01235 512077 and ask to speak to Ruth Berry. Tickets cost £4.00 each (concessions for the unemployed and students at £3.50 with ID). A group of eight coming to Take the Risk will receive the eighth ticket free. So this is a Risk you can afford to Take.

TaKE the RiSK, CS Dept, BMS, Baptist House, 129 Broadway, Didcot, Oxon, OX11 8XA.

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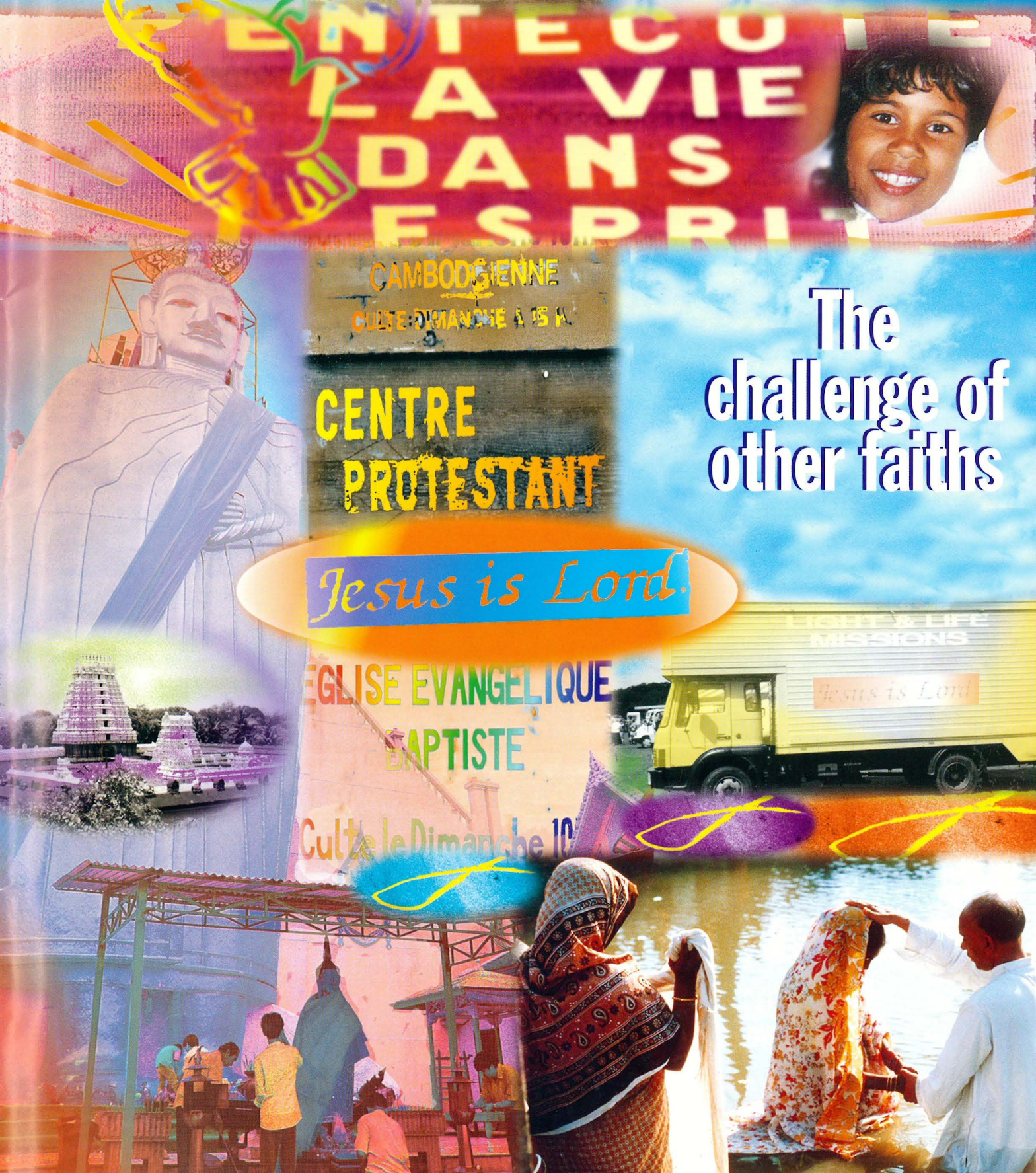

The challenge of other faiths

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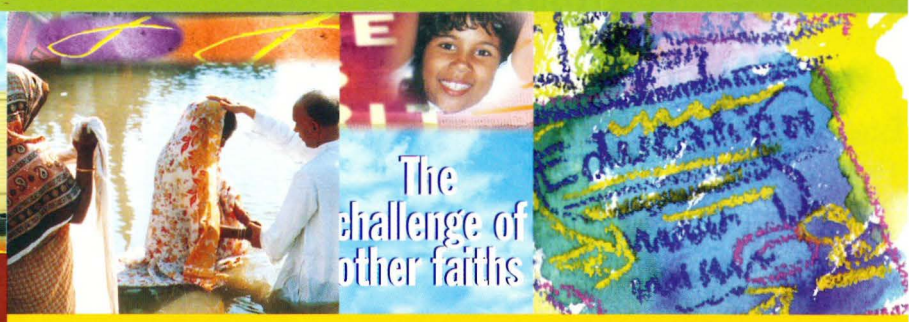


THIS ISSUE
THE CHALLENGE OF OTHER FAITHS

Jan Kendall

A lot of people since Pilate have asked "What is truth?", and there have been a lot of different answers as well. Throughout history the pendulum has swung backwards and forwards, between a "this is what you must believe" kind of mindset and the "it doesn't matter what you believe, because whatever it is, it will be true" reasoning that pervades the Western world today.

This issue of *mb* tries to grapple with the kind of questions that people everywhere are asking today, relating to the validity and authority of other world religions, balancing these questions with the ultimate reality of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

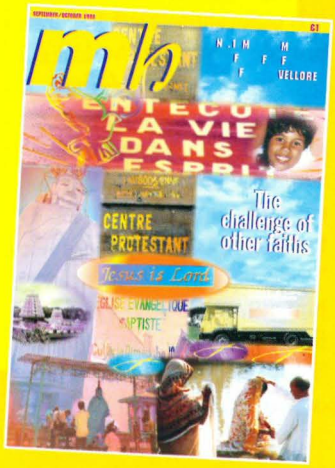
This is all the more pertinent as no longer do we have to "go" overseas, to the furthest corners of the world, to experience other belief systems. Many in the UK are rubbing shoulders daily with people who have come to the UK — or whose parents or grandparents came here — from a different cultural and faith background.

Bewitched by the spirit of the age, it's all too easy for our faith to be a secret personal belief. After all, what right have I (or you) to tell someone else Jesus can save them, but Krishna, Islam, communism, karma, Sikhism, or even materialism can't and won't? For a fascinating unpacking of this dilemma, turn to Alistair Brown's article on page 10.

You'll find our Christmas catalogue with your magazine this time. We have more goods than ever for you to look at, and we hope you will buy gifts and cards for family and friends. Every item purchased is helping the work of BMS, making Jesus known.

With best wishes

Jan



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BEING A BAPTIST – WORLDWIDE

BMS PUBLICATIONS

News

Estonia

The clause in a new Estonian proposed law that stated only Lutheran and Orthodox churches would have special legal status, has been taken out of the bill. "The emergency situation is over" spokesman Toivo Piili said. "The government establishing a special relationship with Lutheran and Orthodox churches would put other churches and congregations into an unequal position." (BWA)

Uzbekistan

The situation for religious freedom in Uzbekistan continues to worsen. In May the Uzbek government ruled that all religious organisations must register to be legal. All groups need 100 or more signatures to start a new congregation. This directly affects many small Baptist churches outside of Tashkent. In addition, no religious meetings will be allowed in homes. (BWA/Open Doors)

Sierra Leone

"Hundreds of defenceless civilians have had arms, legs and other body parts amputated", General Secretary of the Baptist Convention of Sierra Leone Moses Khanu said, attributing these atrocities to the military junta overthrown last February. According to the UNHCR 530,000 refugees from Sierra Leone are currently in Guinea and Liberia, including 182,000 who fled the fighting earlier this year. (BWA)

Lebanon

The Arab Baptist Theological Seminary in Beirut, Lebanon has doubled its intake of students in the academic year 1997/98. Fifty-eight students have registered, twice the number of the previous academic year. The students – 40 men and 28 women – have come from seven Arab countries and four non-Arab countries: Austria, Canada, Egypt, Greece, India, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Sudan and Syria. (EBPS)

Romania

A Christian radio network in Romania, Radio Voice of the Gospel, believes it is being unfairly discriminated against by the Romanian National Council of Audiovisual, and is facing restrictions that do not apply to commercial stations. Every year since 1992 it has applied for broadcasting licences in 13 cities, and has received only six frequencies, four of which were shared. Further applications have been disallowed, and shared frequencies will not be renewed. (Rutherford Institute)

Jamaica
Reggae Gospel

A group of Jamaican Christians have begun to record Bible passages in Patois, a dialect spoken by many people on this northern Caribbean island.

The project is being undertaken in affiliation with the United Bible Society. Courtney Stewart, General Secretary of the Bible Society of the West Indies, said: "The idea of translating the Bible is by no means an attempt to induce people to stop speaking in English. But clearly in a society where people live, communicate, and conceptualise ideas in Patois, it is quite appropriate to provide them with the Scriptures" *(in that dialect)*.

The project group has already translated and recorded John chapter 9 on cassette. John 9:35 in a traditional version reads: "Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and when he had found him he said unto him, 'Dost thou believe in the Son of God?'"(Jerusalem Bible)

The recorded Patois version, if transcribed, would read: "Jesus ear seh dem trow im out and when im fine im, im seh, 'Yu believe ina di son of man?'"

The Jamaican Council of Churches has hailed the project as "a move in the right direction." It also has the support of linguists, who say that Patois satisfies all the criteria for an accepted language. (LAP)

Niger
"Teach us the Bible" plea

A remote Muslim community in Niger has asked to have its own Bible school, so that it can learn more about Christ. Wer Isenet, whose name ironically means "I don't know" in the nomadic Tuareg's Tamasheq language, is a remote desert settlement, 500 miles from the capital, Niamey. The Fulani families who live there are traditionally nominally Islamic in their faith. The families are part of the Woodabe Fulani, of

whom there are around 700,000 in Niger, with only a few Christians. They are semi-nomadic, and have been fiercely resistant to Christianity over the centuries.

A member of the Wer Isenet community became a Christian while visiting

News in Brief

Niamey on business, and told his friends and family about how his life had changed. Others followed, and the community appealed to Youth With A Mission (YWAM) for someone to go and teach them about Jesus.

YWAM leader Jeff Woodke made a two-day trek to Wer Isenet to validate the story. "I was amazed when I found out it was true," he said. The group's new and unexpected openness is in part due to social changes and a recent 'general awakening'. "In the past they simply moved away from any problems. But now farmers push further into the pastoral zone every year and the Woodabe are finding they cannot run from the world any more," said Woodke.

"God is at work in the African nation too," he added.

"Missionaries have been working among the Woodabe for many years laying down the spiritual foundation. Now, from their patient sowing, we are about to reap a harvest."

"God is at work in the African nation too..."

Now two other Woodabe groups have contacted Woodke, one interested in learning more about the Bible, and the other requesting development help. (YWAM)

Mali
Christian school prepares tomorrow's leaders

Muslim parents in Mali, West Africa are queuing up to put

their children on a waiting list for the country's first Christian school, College Samuel.

Around 160 children aged between five and nine currently attend the school, which was founded two years ago, with a vision of preparing leaders for the 21st century. More classes will be added as funding becomes available.

Mali is one of the poorest countries in the world, and most of its 11 million population are Muslims. Generally only a very few children attend under-funded govern-ment- run schools, and many leave before they finish their education.

The demand for places is high. "We could have 120 per →

Alistair Brown

A world of emotion

Normally we'd describe the picture above as a happy group scene. Some lovely smiles, friends together posing for a photograph.

It's one of the saddest photos I've ever taken. The location is Chiang Mai in north Thailand. In the picture are two missionaries, BMS's Jacqui Wells and American Lauran Bethell. The others are teenage mothers and their children. What distresses me so much is that, other than the missionaries and one of the children, every person in this photograph has AIDS. Humanly, all face a bleak future.

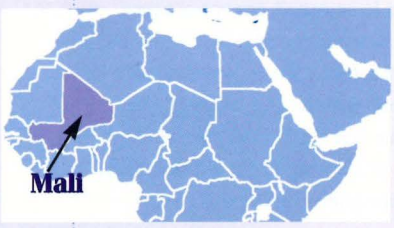
This is the House of Love, and many of the residents were once the abused of the sex industry. No-one wanted them when they got too sick to work. They were just children when they were taken from their villages. Now they don't know where home is or aren't accepted there. No-one wants them. Except Christians, and they've made a home for them where there's love. I'm angry at what's been done in the past to these women and indirectly to their children. But I'm proud that Christians care for them, and glad BMS is part of showing them a divine love, the like of which they've never known before. ●

WORLD News

class," said YWAM director, Jean-Patrick Perrin. "But we stop at 40 because we want to be able to ensure the quality of education remains high."

"Parents know we teach about Jesus," he went on to say, "but they want good education for their children. One father wanted his son to come out of the class while we talked about Jesus, but we said that wasn't possible. He thought about it and decided to put his boy in the school anyway, and was so happy that the next year he came with his second child, and two nephews."

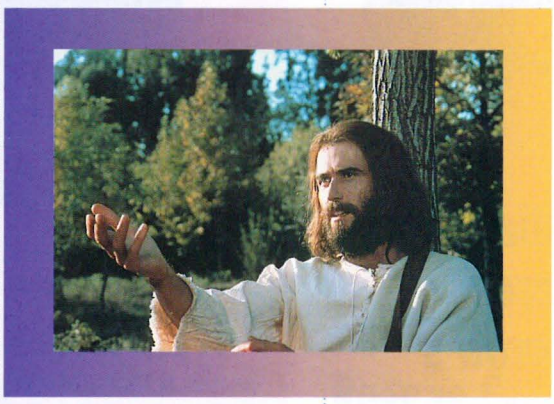
College Samuel's name reflects its aim of producing men and women of character, such as the biblical figures of Samuel and David. The director of the school, Paul Sanogo, said: "we want to teach morals - righteousness, truth and true love - and we want to see our students



become the lawyers, doctors and other professional people of Mali tomorrow. But more than that, we want them all to become disciples of Christ." (YWAM)

Greenland
'Jesus' film makes history

Campus Crusade for Christ's record-breaking 'Jesus' film

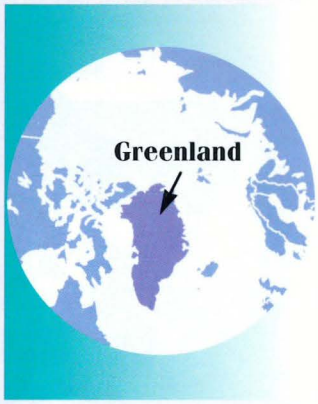


USED WITH PERMISSION OF AGAPE

has become the first feature film to be translated into the Greenlandic language.

Ninety-nine people responded to the salvation appeal given at the recent premiere in the country's capital, Nuuk.

"Because this is the first feature film in history in their own language, there is a great deal of interest in it" director Errol Martens said. "Already a television station in the capital wants to broadcast the film



nationally, but we want to delay that until Christmas next year. First we're planning to train people how to use the film in evangelism so we can send teams out all over Greenland."

The country has a population of 57,000 people – mostly Inuit – who are scattered among the 70 coastal communities, many of which are only accessible by boat. (YWAM)

Latin America
El Niño brings disaster

The effects of El Niño are continuing to cause havoc in all parts of Latin America. El Niño has changed atmospheric conditions across the globe, and in so doing has brought warm waters to the western coast of Latin America.

Argentina has been hardest hit – flooding has swamped six provinces in the north west part of the country and the area has been declared a disaster zone. Farmers have lost their tobacco, cotton, rice and soyabean crops.

Millions of people have been left homeless as people in countries from the Dominican Republic to Brazil have suffered drought, and those in Ecuador and Argentina have been driven out of their homes by floods.

In Peru heavy rains in the highlands have caused usually dry rivers to rise and overflow, forcing more than 200,000 people to flee from their homes.

The governments of South America are faced with a massive relocation problem, and have begun to construct what are euphemistically called 'transfer centres' - in reality tent cities, with no electricity, no water, and no sanitation.

"They told us to come here, then they forgot about us" said Eduardo Argumedo Carlin, a 74-year-old Peruvian. "I don't say, 'My God why have you forsaken me?' Instead I say, 'My God, why have the authorities forsaken me?'" (LAP)

EL COMERCIO

Inspiration, motivation, ideas, news on world mission for churches

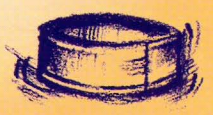
World Mission Link

Experiencing Africa

Members of the Bedford and district BMS Support Group who arrived at Bromham Baptist Church for "An African Experience" found they really experienced the African way of doing things. As the 100 or so people arrived they were asked to wash their hands using the bowls of water at the two entrances. They then sat down to a three course African style meal.

Jim Clarke, BMS Co-ordinator for Central & Eastern England, caused quite a stir when he produced a metal collar worn by an African woman in the last century on her wedding day and thereafter!

And, at the end of it, the sum of £320 was raised to help the work of BMS missionaries Stephen and Elizabeth Allford in Kinshasa.



Dinner Disaster

Horfield Baptist Church Bristol World Mission Group wanted to raise money for the BMS Relief Fund, which raises money to help victims of disasters in areas where BMS has partnerships. They wanted to enjoy themselves as well, and so they held a "Disaster Dinner", which raised £300 for the Fund.

Dates for your Diary

Events & Meetings

Aberystwyth
Tues 8 to Fri 11 Sept
Wales Annual bilingual women's conference, Aberystwyth University
More information: Gareth Hutchinson 01792 360909

Edinburgh
Sat 12 Sept
BMS Youth Event, Bristo Baptist Church
More information: Derek Clark 0141 775 1201

Edinburgh
Wed 16 Sept
East of Scotland Women's Missionary Association
Bristo Baptist Church
More information: Kathleen Barclay 0131 229 3084

Kington
Tues 22 Sept
Worcester Women's Federation Rally
More information: Lavinia Hand 01527 520136

Newport
Sat 26 Sept
Shropshire Women's Auxiliary Missionary Rally
More information: Ivy Jones 01952 506933

Northants
Sat 3 Oct
In Step with the Spirit - in mission and 206th BMS Birthday Celebration, Hackleton Baptist Church
More information: Jim Clarke 01353 778984

Bristol
Sat 3 to Sun 4 Oct
BMS Weekend
Bristol Villages and College Missionary Fellowship
More information Phil Hindle: 01823 698977

Godalming
Tues 6 Oct & 20 October
Evening School of World Mission
Godalming Baptist Church
More Information Martin Poole: 01483 418562

Bournemouth
Wed 7 Oct
Bournemouth Women's Day Apart
More information: Barbara Goose 01202 692 482

West Glamorgan
Wed 7 Oct
Welsh WMA Rally, Brynaman, Siloam Baptist Church
More information: Joyce Williams 01656 732691

Bristol
Sat 10 Oct
Training Day for Missionary Secretaries and other BMS supporters
Bristol and District Association
More information: Phil Hindle 01823 698977

Hove
Sun 11 Oct
Sussex Association Area Celebration, Hove Town Hall
More information: David Hall 01444 870662

Glasgow
Mon 12 Oct
BMS Women's Missionary Fellowship, Adelaides, Bath Street
More information: Jan Watson 0141 882 1201

Rogerstone
Sat 17 Oct
Mission Home and Away, Bethesda Baptist Church
More information: Ruth Wood 01633 852367

Doncaster
Sat 24 to Sun 25 Oct
BMS Weekend
More information: Cath Mawson 01274 487341

Aberdeen
Tues 27 Oct
BMS tea
BU of Scotland Assembly
More information:
Derek Clark
0141 775 1201

Stamp Bureau

March 17 was a day for the record books - on that one day the BMS Stamp Bureau received 70 parcels, weighing a total of 136 kg - almost ten per cent of the expected annual intake. Not surprisingly at the end of the year's first quarter, intake of stamps was up on 1997.

Desmond Samuels

Desmond Samuels, husband to BMS missionary Sheila, died after a short illness on 1 June 1998 of complications associated with cerebral malaria. Desmond was a Presbyter in the Church of North India and Sheila worked alongside him as a hospital chaplain. Sheila had rushed back to Delhi from home assignment in Scotland and both she and their sons were at his bedside when he died. Please remember Sheila and family in your prayers.

Your Giving

From 1 Nov 97 to 30 June 98

Birthday Scheme	£134,891
Relief Fund	£66,677
Lights Camera Action	£834
Word on the Street	£2,986

Geoff writes First Commentary on John

BMS missionary Geoff Bland has just received his latest Thai commentary on John's gospel back from the printers. Geoff says: "It's got a bright green and orange cover and looks really 'cool'. With 220 pages it's obviously not in the R E Brown class, but as there is no other commentary available on John in Thai, it should be useful. The price is 75 baht, about £1.20. Pity that good quality paper-backs can't be bought for that price in the UK!"
This is a major achievement for Geoff, and to have produced an original work in the Thai language is no mean feat. Well done Geoff!

News

News in Brief

Alistair Brown

June General Committee report

Service Opportunties

In a great move of faith, BMS, in line with its strategy to take it into the next century, is now actively seeking to recruit up to 40 new personnel within the next year.

BMS is faced with around 80 needs in nine countries. Says General Director Alistair Brown: "This is not the time for scaling down our mission work. BMS is committed to cutting edge mission, back to its pioneering roots, and there are many places where people have still to experience the gospel. We mean to be there."

Missionary Allowances

The way BMS pays its missionaries is to be made simpler. In so doing, allowances will be made fairer to all, and will provide personnel with an adequate lifestyle in their country of service.

The current system involves intricate calculations, and factors such as children's ages, days in or out of the country, plus a huge array of small allowances for specific purposes and has made the task of paying missionaries a very complex one.

BMS will adopt an index of indices, supplied by an outside professional body, to give the ratio of costs between countries. This gives BMS a much more objective basis to calculate costs relative to the UK.

Management Structures Reviewed

Two BMS departments will be amalgamated under plans proposed by a Management Structures Review Group. The Department for Missionaries and Department of Operations will be brought together, thus eliminating uncertainty and confusion as to which department is doing what, and also should do away with duplication of work.

This new department will be called the Department for World Mission. It will have one director, and seven managers, five of whom would ideally be based overseas, and two — a manager for missionaries and a manager

for operations — who would be based at Didcot.

Other recommendations that were carried were: the Department for Constituency Support will be renamed the Department of Communications, and all senior staff, that is directors, managers and co-ordinators, will be appointed on an open contract, instead of the current five-year renewable contracts.

These changes will all be implemented in January 1999.

Chris Hutt

Giving Down, Legacies Up

Every Baptist in Great Britain needs to give £27 this year to enable BMS to move forward. This was the message Chris Hutt, Director for Finance and Administration told General Committee. At this time of challenge and new opportunities, giving to BMS was down 5.3 per cent for the period November 1997 to May 1998 compared to figures for the same period the previous year.

New Personnel

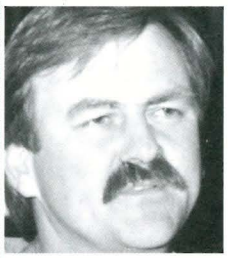
Two teachers from Worcester were the latest additions to BMS personnel as General Committee voted to accept an open-ended long-term offer of service from Simon and Kate Harry. It is hoped they will work in Nepal with UMN.

Simon is an economics teacher, preacher, and Alpha group leader and Kate is a primary school teacher, and Sunday school teacher. They have led housegroups together and are both

members of Red Hill Baptist Church, Worcester.

Other News In Brief:

John Passmore, currently the BMS Representative for Europe, will take on the new role of Representative for Asia and North Africa in the autumn. John worked alongside his wife, Nan, in Bangladesh with BMS from



John Passmore

1977 to 1987, and so will bring considerable knowledge and expertise with him when he takes up this post. John will have responsibility for Bangladesh, Indonesia, Central Asia and North Africa, whilst David Kerrigan, who is based in Sri Lanka, will continue to have responsibility for Sri Lanka, India, Thailand, Nepal and China. Because of his family commitments, John will be based in the UK.

Baptist House News

Welcome to:

Helen Vallis

Helen has joined BMS as Payments Clerk, which means she pays the bills! Helen spent 25 years at the Inland Revenue, and then a year with her own dressmaking business. Together with her husband she is involved with the children's and youth work at her local Baptist church, and she also does the catering on Crusaders holidays.

Julie Buckle

Julie is also working in BMS's Finance and Administration Department as Accounts Clerk. Her responsibilities include keeping control of BMS grants and missionaries' personal accounts. She previously worked for Lloyds Bank and Habitat. Her hobbies include horse-riding, glass painting and embroidery.

Carolyn Tabor

Carolyn is the latest addition to the design team in the Department for Constituency Support. She comes to BMS as a mature student from the Oxford College of Further Education, and has previously worked in marketing and had her own interior design business.

IAM

The body working with healthcare and economic and educational development in Afghanistan, have approved the application for membership from BMS.

Nominations for the BMS Vice-Presidency

Nominations will take place at the October General Committee rather than March of the following year, as has been the general practice. Last October Andrew Green was elected as Vice-President to take effect from April 1998, and this has proved helpful in planning for the responsibilities and promotion of the Presidential year.

CBFC report

David Martin, BMS Director of Operations, and Pam Bryan, BMS Regional Representative for Africa elect, recently attended the CBFC General Assembly held in a Roman Catholic retreat centre in Kinshasa.

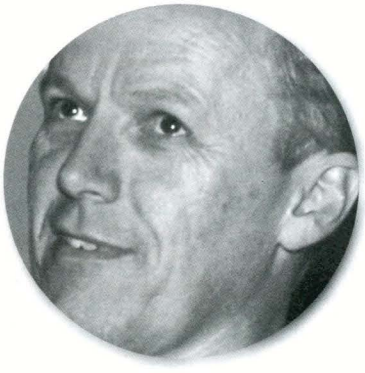
Most of the delegates came from the church provinces. The meeting ratified the revised constitution and bylaws, and also gave time for praise, worship, and for reconciliation between members and peaceful resolution of long-held conflicts.

At the climax of the meeting the Revd Dr Bokundoa and Revd Zinu were elected as General Secretary and Assistant General Secretary respectively.

BMS News

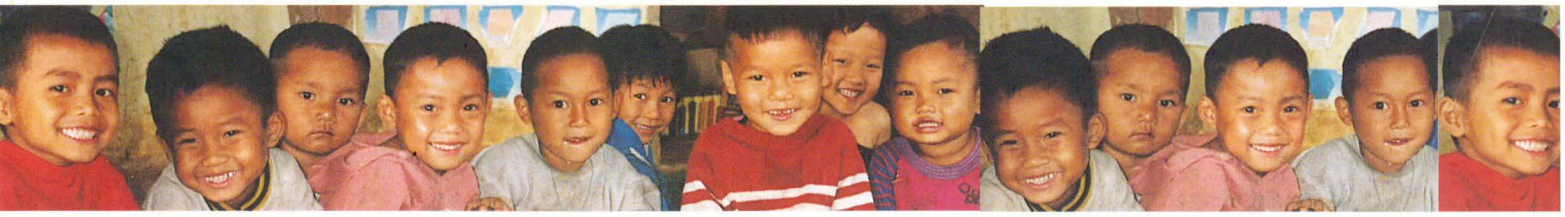
WHAT RIGHT HAVE WE TO EVANGELISE

ALISTAIR BROWN ANSWERS ONE OF LIFE'S MOST OFTEN ASKED QUESTIONS



Ian's an enthusiast for his latest car. No wonder. His four-wheel drive Toyota is comfortable, spacious and could go over almost any terrain (including the city streets where he does 99 per cent of his driving!). "Everyone ought to have one of these," he enthuses.

Well, Ian's enthusiasm for his Toyota is good, but I won't be buying one. First, I can't afford it. Second, I'm happy with the car I have. Sure it's not as impressive as his but it gets me from A to B safely. I'm pleased he likes his car but content that what I have will do for me.



Much the same logic I've just used to justify keeping my car is the logic of our modern world about faith. "You believe what you want, and I'll believe what I want. Each to their own." All that counts, our post modern world seems to say, is that it works for you. As someone has quipped, it doesn't matter what you believe as long as you believe it doesn't matter.

If that's true, though, I've no right to tell anyone they ought to believe what I believe. Imposing your faith on someone is at least arrogant and at worst a form of abuse.

So was William Carey wrong in 1792 to form BMS on the grounds that Christians needed to take the gospel to the world? Was his colleague at Serampore, William Ward, mistaken in 1818 when he urged Chittagong converts to evangelise their neighbours? "Labour day and night and beg of them with tears not to cast themselves into hell, but to come to Christ and live."

Are we more enlightened now? Should BMS shut up shop and all of us keep quiet about what we believe? Have we a right to evangelise others?

The most critical questions must be: Are all faiths equally valid? Does it not matter what you believe providing you're sincere and trying your best?

There are equally critical answers to these questions.

1) It's no good sincerely believing the wrong thing. People hallucinating on drugs have sincerely believed they could fly and launched themselves from ten-storey high windows. Their sincerity didn't save them from a tragic death. Sincerely believing Buddha has the key to life doesn't make Buddhism right.

2) Your best isn't necessarily good enough. If a bush fire was overtaking me at 30 mph, my very best top speed (12 mph!?) won't save me. Not even a Linford Christie could keep running at 30 mph. Sometimes even our best won't do. No-one will get into heaven on their efforts for they'll never reach an acceptable standard for a perfect God.

3) The Bible shows Jesus as unique. Many times that's said, including by Jesus himself. "I am the way and the truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6)

Jesus is the ultimate authority, and he says "Go"

Peter and the apostles were no less definite: "Salvation is found in no-one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12) Words like these were spoken to sincere adherents of another faith, not because what they believed was wholly wrong but because it was incomplete. They needed to believe in Jesus. And those words were spoken at immense personal risk, not something people do unless they're convinced that what they're telling has to be known.

But even if we believe Jesus is special, have we a right to try and persuade others to believe in him?

Of course, others have the right to believe what they want. We may despise what others think but, in general, they're entitled to think it.

But that doesn't keep Christians quiet, for at least two reasons.

The first reason is compassion. If my friend walks dangerously near a cliff edge I know to be crumbling, I'll warn him and suggest he keeps on the path. If I stayed silent, and a rock slipped and he plunged to his doom, I'd be almost criminally uncaring. Of course, if I warn him and he still wants to walk on the edge, that's his choice. But I must give him the chance of safety. I think it was Charles Finney who said, "To tell someone less than what he needs to know is to fail to love him."

The second is command. Ultimately I don't speak or stay silent about Jesus because of what suits me or suits others. Christians are under Jesus' orders, and his commission is to tell all people everywhere about him. "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations..." (Matt. 28:18-19) Those famous words of The Great Commission are non-negotiable. Jesus is the ultimate authority, and he says "Go".

I fear we've lost confidence in our gospel. We're not sure it's really special. And I suspect we've bought into a pseudo political correctness that doesn't assume any right to tell others one belief or way of life is superior to another. If Jesus or the first apostles had thought like that, the good news would have died with them. It mustn't die with us. We have a unique message. Without it a lost world will stay lost.

Until all have at least heard of Jesus, like other missions BMS has a busy future.

Alistair Brown is General Director of BMS

THE GOD-SHAPED GAP

THE GOD-SHAPED GAP

PHIL HALLIDAY REPORTS ON SECULARISM IN FRANCE

France is a secular state and proud of it! The strongest religious conviction is the belief that there is no God.

The French have not simply stumbled into secularism. They have not mysteriously and unfortunately found themselves without a faith to call their own. On the contrary, their brand of secularism is strong and determined, articulate and aggressive.

Philosophy rather than religion is taught in French schools, usually from an atheistic standpoint, and indeed all talk of religion has been banned in the educational system since 1905. Communism was more quickly accepted in France than, for example, in Britain. In the elections of 1946, the Communist Party won 28 per cent of the vote and even today the Communists still retain around ten per cent of the country's allegiance.

Whereas in Britain the church is generally perceived as having a positive effect upon society, the French are more likely to shun religion and to protect themselves against what are perceived to be its negative intentions. In a recent national survey, only nine per cent of the French said that they were influenced in any way by religious belief when making important decisions in life.

As a family and as a church, we are confronted constantly by the effects of nearly a hundred years of secularisation in France. At the school carnival last term, one of the little girls in our church was not allowed to dress up as an angel "because such a costume would be too religious". The wearing of a cross or crucifix is also against the rules in school.

Paradoxically, the latest edition of our primary school's magazine reported that the top class's project for the term has been astrology. This top class had also published two pages of horoscopes in the magazine, with the following preamble: "What is going to happen to you over the school holidays? To those of you who have never believed in horoscopes, we say: Go on! You won't be disappointed!"

We have recently had a Clairvoyants' Fair in our local hypermarket. If Sainsburys or Tescos wanted to compete for customers, one could imagine them giving away tins of beans or cutting the price on a range of products. Here in Massy, our local hypermarket mounted a Clairvoyants' Fair and set up booths in the aisles to give their customers free consultations.

Among the adverts for pizza and soap powder which arrive daily in our post box, we regularly find publicity for mediums and spiritual healers. They claim to offer the answer to all of life's problems – in business, in love, in health matters – for a price.

One could point to the wider statistics in France: two divorces for every five marriages; one abortion for every four births; more than 150,000 suicide attempts each year; 32 per cent of the population taking tranquillisers (seven per cent regularly).

Having removed Christ from the picture, the French have created an all too apparent void in their lives – a void which other non-Christian forces are only too glad to try and fill. ●

Phil Halliday is a BMS missionary, involved with church work in France.

THE CROSS & THE CRESCENT

RYDER AND HEATHER ROGERS TALK OF THEIR ENCOUNTERS WITH MUSLIMS IN ALBANIA

The man lurched across the road between our houses, the worse for wear with alcohol, pushed his finger into my shoulder and with glaring eyes pronounced, "Zoti është një" (God is one). This is the basic statement of every Muslim. "Yes. God is one", I agreed.

"But God is ONE", he shouted. "That's what Jesus said", I replied and before he could repeat himself for the third time added, "But as a Christian I believe differently from you because for us, Jesus is Zot (God and Lord)".

He was in no fit state to be told when he slurred, "I am a Muslim," that a true Muslim wouldn't be drunk or smoke cigarettes.

Conversing with Albanian people, they are ready to say as soon as possible, "I'm a Muslim."

"It's great that you believe in God" is my usual reply. "Jesus loves Muslims." He gave his life as a kurban (sacrifice) for Muslims."

At the end of the month of Ramadan (the great Muslim fast), the sound of lambs can be heard bleating the night before Kurban Bajrami when they are sacrificed and eaten. "Do you know what Kurban Bajrami is about?" we ask our Muslim neighbours. Generally the answer is "No." So we explained how God tested Abraham's faith by asking him to sacrifice his own son, but stopped the knife killing him, giving a lamb as a substitute. "That's why you substitute a lamb" we inform them but add, "Kurban Bajrami is also special for Christians because on that same mountain range, God promised, "I will provide". Two thousand years later Jesus gave his life there as the once-for-all sacrifice for our sins. Gëzuar (happy) Kurban Bajrami".

On another occasion, I met an enthusiastic 16-year-old Muslim lad who complained, "You Christians believe Jesus is the Son of God. God is God alone, he has no son." As we walked along the dusty road, I tried to explain how Jesus came to earth as 'God with us' and was given the name Son of God because people thought that Joseph was his father. He isn't another God, he isn't a child of God, but the appearance in human flesh of a part (though still completely God) of the one God.

One evening talking with neighbours outside a local shop, a young man who came to our church but rejected Christianity complained, "Isa (Jesus) was not the Son of God, he was his prophet." "As a prophet from God, did he speak only the truth?" I asked as we sat together on a bench surrounded by his friends. "Certainly," he replied. "But you are making him a liar because in the gospels, when he said that he was the I AM (the one and only God), the Jews took up stones to kill him for making himself God. They knew what he meant. Disbelieve the Bible and you destroy Islam."

> "So we explained how God tested Abraham's faith by asking him to sacrifice his own son."

As you can see, there are many common points that we have with our Albanian Muslim friends, but many crucial differences. The most important is "Jezusi është Zot" (Jesus is Lord). ●

Heather and Ryder Rogers are BMS personnel working in Albania.

Lila, her husband and her two daughters

jenny dorman

More than a good working relationship

jenny dorman

JENNY DORMAN TELLS OF A TYPICAL DAY SPENT WITH HER HINDU ASSISTANT, LILA.

It's 9.00 am on Monday morning at United Mission to Nepal (UMN). In the new light and airy open plan office of the Training & Development Section, Lila, who has worked for UMN for nearly eight years, is carefully inspecting her colourful collection of African violets. She sighs as she notes that the resident rat has again been nibbling off the new shoots.

Lila consults her "things to do list", glancing at the pile in her in-tray and adds some other items to the list. I breeze in from the prayer meeting having stopped to chat with one of the Nepali management consultants who has just returned from a three day workshop at Jarjakot. He is exhausted having taken four days to get back to Kathmandu on foot and by bus.

Lila's weekend had been entirely taken up with domestic chores, visiting her mother's house on the other side of Kathmandu with an enormous pile of washing, as there was no water in her flat. Lila and her husband took the radical decision to move out of his parents' home about eighteen months ago. It was an uncomfortably acrimonious parting but each day when Lila returned from work, she would find that her second baby daughter was crying and fractious, mother-in-law having made no serious attempt to feed her. Lila has not produced a son. She has had two difficult deliveries and would like to give her daughters the sort of education she, as a village girl, never had.

Lila and her husband are Brahmin, high-caste Hindus, but this does not mean that they are wealthy. Lila's mother is illiterate, her father reads Sanskrit and spends several hours each day saying prayers. His three sons and daughter are all earning money. He potters in his well-kept garden and shares his traditional wisdom with any who care to listen. As a family they enjoy observing all the Hindu festivals although Lila admits that the lengthy preparation of food and entertaining of relatives exhaust all the womenfolk. Quite a lot of her annual leave from UMN is absorbed by days off to do 'puja' for relatives who have died. This entails propitiating the gods on behalf of the deceased.

> "We all need to practise forgiveness every day, forgiving and being forgiven"

Whereas I come from a very different culture in the UK. I spend less time on prayer and scripture reading than many Hindus, and am quite glad to have escaped from the commercialisation of Christmas in the West. Since coming to Nepal, however, I have found new meaning in the traditional church calendar, which presents a distinct message at Advent, Christmas, Lent etc.

We plan the day ahead. There are assignments to be marked from staff in the projects outside Kathmandu. All are keen to improve their command of English. Lila marks the work of the basic course but doesn't hesitate to refer to me when she is not sure. She now realises that there are many different and correct ways of saying something. Mean-while, I draft a more advanced language and skills development programme on the computer. So both of us can seek and give help.

About 10.00 am Buddhi brings in glasses of sweet, milky tea. We now turn to planning the next workshop we will run in Pokhara. We agree on the objectives if Nepali staff are going to take over the management of projects from expatriates.

Other expatriates and I know that our success should be largely measured by our ability to work ourselves out of a job. We are here to train Nepalis to manage efficiently and with integrity and to this end, UMN has drawn up a list of values. All members of staff should subscribe to these whatever their religious beliefs. However, the values are undoubtedly Christian in that they include concepts like forgiveness. This can only be satisfactorily explained by the unique example of Jesus Christ. We all need to practise forgiveness every day, forgiving and being forgiven. I know I love Lila as a colleague and friend because I can see in her the image of God but I long for Lila to recognise that her love is only real because Jesus first loved her. ●

Jenny Dorman serves with BMS, teaching English as a foreign language in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Muslims in High Wycombe : my neighbour, my concern, my friend?

PHIL GOODCHILD ASKS ARE THERE MORE QUESTIONS THAN ANSWERS?

High Wycombe is home to around 10,000 Pakistani Muslims. How many of this community have received a clear presentation of the gospel? Probably less than half of one percent. How many have been befriended by Christians? It would appear less still. There are no known Muslim-background believers in the town.

What are God's purposes in bringing Muslims to the UK? How is God already at work in their community? These are questions we are seeking to answer. Acts 17:26-27 suggests God determines the placement of peoples for a purpose; that they might find God.

Christians frequently see Islam as an impregnable stronghold and Muslims as typified by radicals or fundamentalists. The Muslim view and understanding of "Christian" is often that of Spice Girl or Gazza; media's reflection of our secular society.

Our response is based on the premise that the Muslim has to see and know the word 'become flesh' in real, meaningful terms. Genuine spirituality must be demonstrated in our everyday lives.

There will be many ways to a Muslim's heart. We have begun to pursue a three-tiered approach through dialogue, the meeting of practical needs, and proclamation of the gospel. Of course in practice these always overlap.

Experienced missionaries confirm nothing can replace one-to-one friendship building. Such relationships have to begin to overcome the fears and wrong attitudes on both sides to build trust.

We must start prepared to listen and learn; to understand the Muslim mindset, beliefs and values. There is need for involvement and integration with their culture, not least to avoid offence. When open dialogue can be achieved we have the opportunity to present the truth of Christ.

In our pluralistic and secular society, many concerns of Christians will be shared by Muslims. On issues of mutual concern Christians and Muslims can stand together.

Christ can be made known in very practical ways; for example helping with form filling, schooling concerns, and simple acts of kindness. Our greatest involvements have come through teaching English and providing tuition for children.

We look for opportunities to offer prayer, perhaps for sickness, and this is rarely refused. This can bring an initial awareness of Jesus, in whose name we pray, in the meeting of needs.

The Muslim's conversion will be costly for the individual concerned; viewed as betrayal of family and community and deserving of punishment. The cost for the Church will be in providing quality fellowship and support. Will converts join existing churches? Again, it will depend how culturally British they have become. For many, ethnic, culturally relevant worship will be a necessity.

God determines the placement of peoples for a purpose

From more than 2,000 leaflets hand-delivered this year two fruitful relationships have developed for us. Our on-going prayer is that God will lead us to those who are truly seeking God.

God has the answers to the questions this work poses, and his purposes will be fulfilled in Wycombe's Muslim community. The exciting prospect is that Wycombe's Christians can be a part of it.

There are clearly no short-cuts. It will require long-term commitment but the different approaches required in meeting the needs make this a task in which many can be involved. ●

Phil Goodchild recently completed his BTh at London Bible College and co-ordinates the Word of Life team: an inter-church venture reaching out to High Wycombe's Muslim community

HOW DOES A BIBLE COLLEGE PREPARE ITS STUDENTS FOR THE CHALLENGE OF OTHER FAITHS? **PETER RIDDELL** EXPLAINS.

At College we offer a wide range of subjects covering missiology, world religions, and the study of Islam which engage with the challenge of a Christian perspective on other faiths.

In order to help students understand that there are many responses to this challenging issue, the courses present many Christian approaches to other faiths. Students are able to trace particular streams of thought within various Christian churches and to see how attitudes have evolved in response to changing social circumstances, especially as a result of large-scale migration of adherents of other faiths to the UK.

The courses seek to portray the human face of other faiths. By doing this, students are able to see the variety of human

involvement in other faith communities. These include interfaith dialogue - not portrayed as an end in itself - often based more on relationship building than on faith sharing. The skill of apologetics is also necessary, that is Christian responses to difficult questions from adherents of other faiths. This is supplemented by the need for the reverse; that is, asking difficult questions, or levelling challenges, at adherents of other faiths. Interwoven within the above is a commitment to evangelism; affirming the uniqueness of Christ and the Christian message with a commitment to sharing the Christian faith with adherents of other faiths.

The presence of the Centre for Islamic Studies and Muslim-Christian Relations (CIS) at the College means that a major emphasis in our courses about other faiths focuses upon Islamic communities in Britain and overseas. Nevertheless, the study of Islam is accompanied by modules in courses focusing upon other world religions including Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Sikhism.

Peter Riddell is Director of the Centre for Islamic Studies and Muslim-Christian Relations, and Senior Lecturer in Islam and Linguistics at London Bible College

Mike Pilavachi

Is our faith just "different" ?

The world is changing before our eyes. Modern communications and ease of travel have turned our planet into the 'global village'. Also, the continued migration of people of different faiths, together with the relative decline on institutional Christianity, has turned our nation into a pluralist society. Add into the mix, the mushrooming growth of New Age religions and a Church which has always seen mission as somewhere you go, it is clear that to be an effective Church today, we have a good deal of adjusting to do. If we are to continue to obey the great commission, we will always need to go into all the world. However, in addition to that, the truth is dawning that the world (Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs etc) has come to us. With all these changes, a new cultural attitude has come, that of relativism. Certainly among the younger generations there is a new approach to truth – the idea that a section of the population has a monopoly on "absolute truth" which, by definition means that others are in error, is regarded as offensive and arrogant. Rather you have your truth and I have mine. One is not superior to the other, they are just different.

How do we, as a people who believe we have had the truth revealed to us and have been given a mandate to pass it on, deal with this new situation? First, we must not lose our confidence in the gospel. It will help us to realise that the first century Church found itself in the same position we are in now. Peter, Paul and the others had to proclaim the gospel in a multi-cultural, pluralist world. Indeed Paul, while in Athens, took the statue dedicated to the unknown god as his starting point as he began to make Christ known. We must learn how to tell our story with courage, sensitivity and respect. We should strive to communicate the unchanging, absolute truth of our gospel in a way that honours the culture in which we find ourselves.

"To the Jews I have become a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (although I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some." (1Cor 9:20-22)

Mike Pilavachi heads up the Soul Survivor team and pastors a congregation in Watford specially aimed at reaching young people.

Gypsy Revival

JANET MALCOLMSON TALKED TO TWO PEOPLE WHOM GOD CALLED TO SPREAD CHRISTIANITY AMONG THE GYPSIES

A trail of yellow fishes led a retired pastor and his wife to discover a remarkable revival.

Curiosity led Colin Rogers and his wife Vivienne to follow the crudely painted fishes on a road leading from Malvern – where the couple live – to Worcester just over two years ago.

What they encountered at the end of the trail was to change both their lives. For in a field by the roadside, Colin and Vivienne came across a Christian Gypsy Convention.

Vilified for generations, Gypsies are not commonly associated with Christianity.

But there is a massive silent revival underway among a community still often regarded with suspicion – if not downright hostility – by many members of mainstream society.

The tremendous faith of these Gypsy Christians was brought home to Colin – a former pastor of Upton-upon-Severn Baptist Church forced to retire after suffering two strokes – and Vivienne when they plucked up the courage to enter the field which lay at the end of the trail of fishes.

"We parked in a layby and Vivienne went into the field to a truck where a Gypsy man was handing out cans of drink to some lads," recalled Colin. "He stopped what he was doing and greeted Vivienne, guiding her to a Gypsy prayer meeting in the red and white striped Big Top erected in the field.

"He then took her to his own caravan and handed her some literature. Vivienne asked if he would come to meet me, as I was still sitting in the car. There ensued the start of a friendship.

"The Gypsy was Davey Jones, the leader of the 'Light and Life Movement'. He told us revival had broken out among the Gypsies 17 years ago, when he became a Christian.

"It emerged Davey was similar to me in many respects. We both shared a pastor's heart and, although much younger than me, he had also suffered a stroke which left him with similar problems of speech from which he was recovering.

"The three of us joined hands and prayed for each other and revival with a real sense of unity of spirit. As we left, Davey gave us a warm invitation to return the following day."

Colin and Vivienne had no doubt the meeting was sent of God.

After Colin retired as a pastor, the couple had been drawn into a ministry of prayer.

"During April 1996, Vivienne felt the distinct impression God was saying to her 'pray for the world'," explained Colin. "The Lord gave her a vision of a solitaire diamond ring in a red leather case. The scene shifted to field upon field of diamonds.

"It seemed God was saying to us he had many precious 'diamonds' to gather from 'fields' across the world.

"The message seemed urgent and, as we talked together, I urged Vivienne to keep the vision in her heart and share it only when the time was right."

The significance of this vision suddenly became clear when the couple returned to the Convention the day after meeting Davey Jones, to be warmly welcomed among some 2,000 Gypsies.

'The Lord's hand is upon the Gypsies at the moment,' she explained 'and it's urgent!'

After a prayer meeting the couple stepped into the path of a woman.

"She enquired if we were 'prayer warriors'," said Colin. "We replied 'yes'. 'The Lord's hand is upon the Gypsies at the moment,' she explained, 'and it's urgent! We don't know when his hand will be removed and we need your prayers'. Vivienne suddenly felt released to share the vision she had been given two months previously.

"She reached the words 'field upon field' and looked down to realise she was standing in a field in which there were many Gypsies coming to Christ. There would be many more Gypsies in similar fields all across the world.

"These were the 'precious gems' God was longing to gather in – a harvest of precious souls!

"We believe the Gypsy woman – whose husband we found out later was a jeweller and dealer in diamonds – realised the significance of the vision as she continued 'we are at the front line. We need people to support us in prayer. We must gather in the Gypsies while there is time'."

Two months later, Colin and Vivienne received a phone call from a woman called Penny Foster, who expressed a desire to produce occasional Romani prayer bulletins. They became interested in this work and, by last winter, four had been issued.

At last year's Convention near Hawkesbury, Coventry, which was attended by Gypsies from all over the world, 20 young trainee pastors were commissioned.

"There was a real sense of the awesome presence of God as we worshipped together," said Colin. "We were impressed by the sincerity, fervour and passion of the Gypsies for the Lord and the souls he longs to bring to Himself. We heard many wonderful testimonies of transformed lives. We were further impressed by their desire to be good witnesses where they are placed, evidenced by a very practical concern to leave sites cleaner than when they arrived."

Colin and Vivienne sense God's call to help further the spread of Christianity among the Gypsies.

"When the well-known 19th Century evangelist Gypsy Rodney Smith was asked why he didn't preach to Gypsies, he always replied, 'Their time has not yet come,'" said Colin. "Today, their time has come and the revival – often called the silent revival – among the Gypsies continues, not only in this country but in 45 others around the world.●

Janet Malcolmson is a freelance journalist

Photographs opposite: top: Vivienne with a Gypsy family at a Light and Life Mission; centre: a yellow fish sign on the road, pointing the way to the Mission Tent; inset: Colin and Vivienne Rogers; left :Gypsy worship; below : Light and Life Mission with French Gypsies.

A SERIES EDITED BY **JAN KENDALL** THAT LOOKS AT TOWNS AND CITIES AROUND THE WORLD WHERE BMS PERSONNEL ARE WORKING

vellore

BY ANN BOTHAMLEY

Our Town

INDIA

INTRODUCTION

Vellore is set among rocky hills just 90 miles due west of Madras. The town is best known in history books as the scene of mutinies and warring factions of Muslims and Hindus. Its 16th century hill fort is a dominating feature still, surrounded by a moat and an old drawbridge which is now a road leading into its precincts. On the outskirts of the town the state jail is famous for the incarceration in the past of such famous people as Jawaharlal Nehru and others at the time of Independence.

Situated not too far from the equator and on the plains of India, the climate of Vellore is hot for most of the year with often a shortage of water when the monsoon fails. The long hot months sap the energy of all who live here.

The population of Vellore is 345,000 while the daily floating population is estimated at more than 250,000 per day. People gravitate to Vellore from all parts of the country every day, by bus, car and train. They come from the surrounding villages with ox carts laden with rice and other grains, vegetables and fruit for the market.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

BY JUDITH AND TONY SYKES

A place of contrasts

Transport: bullock carts, cyclists, rickshaws, buses, cars.

Beautifully built and decorated homes next to mud built shacks with coconut matting roofs and cooking pots just outside the door.

Noise, horns, bells, music, shouting stall holders, birds.

Colour: bright saris, neat rows of fruit and vegetables, contrasted against the rubbish you have to walk over. Crowded streets where you have to manoeuvre around bullocks, rickshaws, mopeds and people sitting on the ground selling their wares, cows sleeping wherever they will. Smells: the whiff of freshly ground coffee, the strong, sweet scent of jasmine, the fish market, the overpowering smell of spices, freshly ground. Now a year later – what was overwhelming has become commonplace.

Streetholders greet us as we pass; we elbow our way on to the buses like everyone else and eat rice with our hands. From those who have so little to share we have learnt generosity.

When out cycling or walking complete strangers have invited us into their homes. From them we have learnt friendliness towards strangers.

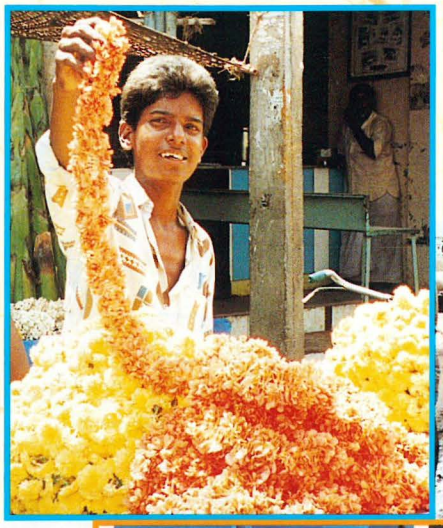
THE PEOPLE

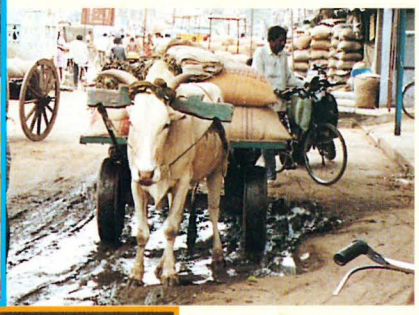
The people of Vellore are Tamils, but Punjabis can be seen drinking coffee with people from Gujurat and the inhabitants of the north east states shopping beside Malayalees from Kerala and the people of Bihar. There are always those from Bengal and as far away as Kashmir and Bangladesh.

While older, wealthy families have lived in Vellore for generations, others have been overseas and return to build houses and settle here. Like every city and town in India, Vellore has its population of poor people, who eke out a living on the pavement or at the bus stand. There are the rag pickers, who live in comparative squalor, and a considerable number of beggars.

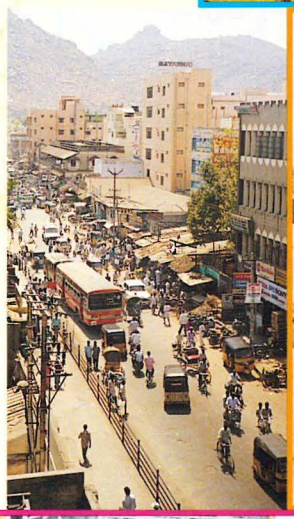
Everywhere you go in this town you will find hundreds of people. They hang on the footplates of crowded buses, jostle

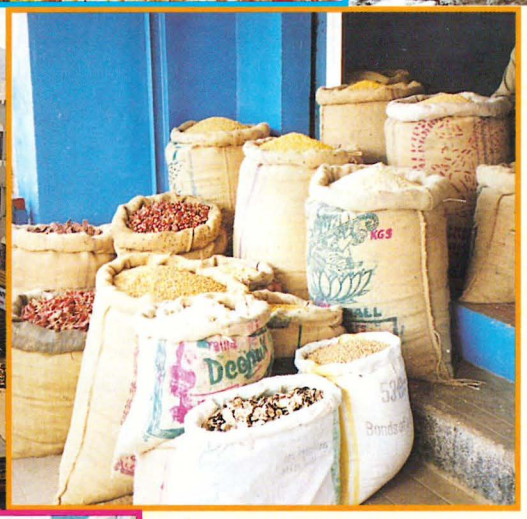
bullock **carts**
cyclists *rickshaws*
buses *cars*
noise **horns**
bells *music*
shouting *stall*
holders *bright*
saris overpowering
smell of *spices*





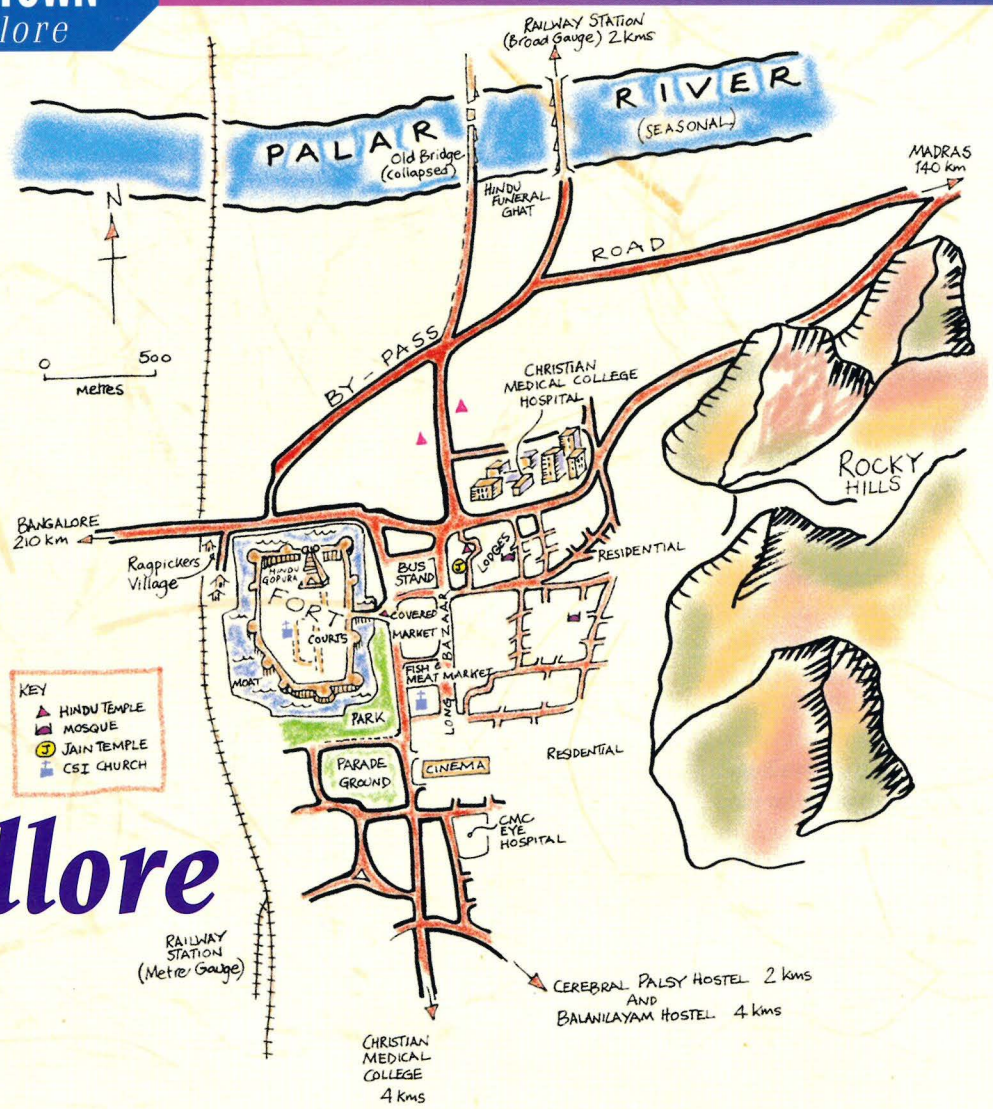
in the market to buy vegetables and fruit. Pour into the outpatient building and eke out a living drawing pictures on the pavement or repairing sandals under an umbrella at the side of the road. They cram into coffee shops, are seen purchasing expensive saris, they strain on the pedals of the rickshaw, pulling far too many children home from school and drive their oxen carts laden with rice into the market. They weep as they arrange transport for a dead relative back to their home in Assam or Calcutta, and sometimes they light candles in thanks to the God of the Christians who has brought a son safely into the world.





bullock **carts**
cyclists *rickshaws*
buses *cars*
noise **horns**
bells *music*
shouting *stall*
holders *bright*
saris overpowering
smell of *spices*

india



Vellore

RELIGION

Vellore is predominantly a Hindu town, but is also known to have one of the largest populations of Muslims in the south of India. The turrets of mosques mingle with the Hindu gopurums, while Christian churches range from the Sri Lankan Pentecostals and small independent congregations to the Church of South India and the Catholics. Religious tolerance is part of Vellore. Both Hindu and Muslim shop-keepers sit side-by-side and all excel in stocking the requirements for each festival, be it Hindu, Muslim or Christian.

CHRISTIAN MEDICAL COLLEGE AND HOSPITAL

The hospital is shortly to celebrate its centenary. Started by a single lady missionary of the American Reformed Church, it soon became a Protestant interdenominational and international institution, bringing qualified missionary staff from the USA, Britain, Germany and Australia. The hospital now has 1,500 beds and almost all its staff are highly qualified Indians. The hospital still remains willing and actually wants people from overseas to work alongside its staff.

Training is given in every aspect of the medical, nursing and paramedical sciences and recently the Christian Medical College and Hospital was given a ranking as the second best medical college and hospital in the Indian sub-continent.

The hospital is known especially for its impartial care for all who come, from the urban poor of Vellore itself to those from the far northern states and beyond. By the year 2000, the much-needed centenary project of a hospital for women and children will be completed. Tony Sykes has considerable responsibility as a civil engineer working as a liaison between the contractors and the institution.

Vellore has many schools, Catholic, Muslim and government besides two which are run by the Christian Medical College and Hospital for its staff children and others from the town. The Ida Scudder school has considerable standing in the town and while openly Christian in character, Hindu and Muslim families also seek admission to the school.

PROFILE

JEAN JEBEGNANAM

Jean is now headmistress of the Junior School on the College Campus. Some years ago Jean resigned from her job at Scudder school to start a work among the rag pickers and gypsies of Vellore, bringing their needs to the attention of the local church and

government officials. The gypsies have already been given land and homes to live in. It is hoped that the rag pickers will soon be relocated where they no longer have to walk more than a kilometre to fetch water.

PROFILE
JOHNSON

Johnson is a Telegu sweeper from Andrah Pradesh. As a young man he came across the border with other families seeking work in the Christian Hospital in Vellore. Challenged by a christian doctor Johnson turned from Hinduism and for years has faithfully spread the good news of Jesus, not only in the sweeper's village, but to the relatives of patients who stay in the hospital annexe. Many would see his work of cleaning the bathrooms and toilets as demeaning, yet for Johnson, he believes this work was given by God. Everyone without exception wants their bathroom clean so Johnson has access to every room. With his ability to speak in Tamil, Hindi and English besides his mother tongue of Telegu he quickly communicates with those he meets. ●

Children from the Rag Pickers village, Vellore.
Below left: The school, at the Rag Pickers village, Vellore

The Democratic Republic of CONGO Not

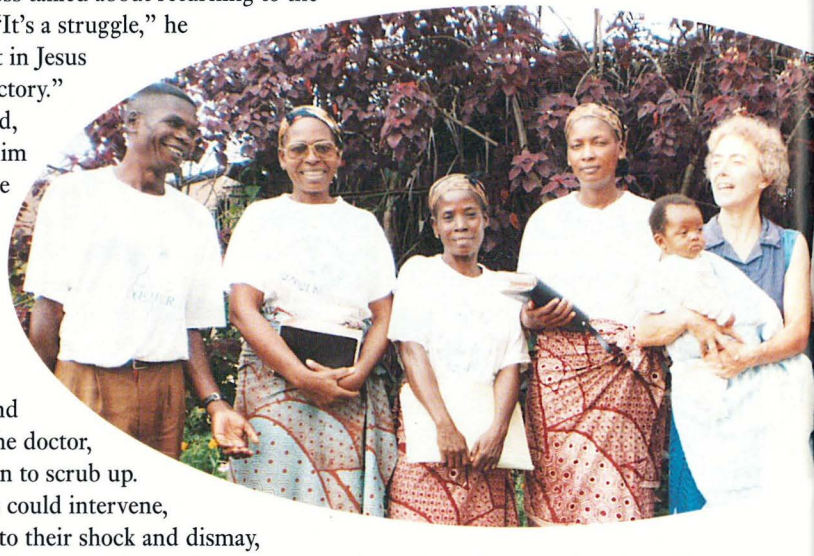
Two years is not long in terms of ministry. Barely long enough to get to know your flock, let alone lead them anywhere. It was all that Pastor Mbieme had on the Bateke plateau, however, before his ministry was cut short by his untimely death.

He had been unwell, but during the women's seminar at Bwantaba had seemed to be back on form. He'd accompanied the evangelisation team to several villages and then back to Kinshasa, anticipating a hernia operation. In the event the doctor threw in appendix removal for good measure, as is often the case here. Six weeks later, well recovered, moving about the city, he was planning to return to work on the plateau.

Then, one Monday, he was hit by severe abdominal pains and nausea. Next day his wife got him to the medical centre, where medicines were prescribed. Wednesday afternoon he did not look good. In considerable discomfort, he nonetheless talked about returning to the plateau. "It's a struggle," he said, "but in Jesus there's victory." We prayed, and left him in the care of his wife and his mother. Pastor Enguta arrived and fetched the doctor, who began to scrub up. Before he could intervene, however, to their shock and dismay, Pastor Mbieme passed away. Just like that. On the Wednesday night.

Only the next morning did it become generally known. The Kingasani District committee, in monthly session, stunned by the news, suspended business and agreed on the amount each fellowship should contribute to cover the cost of coffin and burial, some NZ20,000,000 (about £100). Some went off to find the money, while the pastors crossed town to the medical centre. Members of the family had gathered, the women among them sobbing.

An impromptu service was held under the trees, the district evangelist preaching on being surprised by death, and the need to be ready. The coffin's arrival provoked a lengthy discussion as to where the body was to be exposed but, once loaded, it was taken briefly to the family home and then to the Kingasani church, the District headquarters. There, according to custom, people gathered to

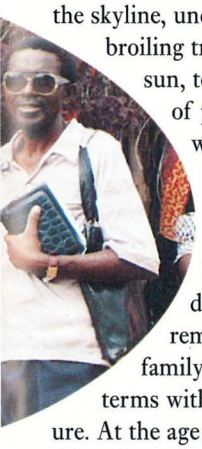


Right : Pastor Mbieme (right of group) with leaders of a women's seminar at Bwantaba.

Long...

view the body, to weep, pray and sing through the night, with choirs arriving to take their turn.

At midday on the Friday, after a service of thanksgiving in a packed church, the coffin was transferred to a Land Rover and, accompanied by family, fellow pastors and friends in other vehicles, taken to Kinkole cemetery. In a quiet, grassy plain, in sight of the Bateke plateau rising abruptly on the skyline, under a broiling tropical sun, to the sound of prayers and words of Scripture, the pastor's body in its wooden box was lowered into the sandy soil. Everything had been done decently and in order, but it remained for the widow, family and friends to come to terms with such a brusque departure. At the age of 54 Pastor Mbieme had fallen ill on Monday, died on Wednesday and been buried on Friday.



On the plateau too the reaction was stunned disbelief, and full explanations had to be given at each place. During the first Sunday service at Bwantaba thanks were rendered to God for Pastor Mbieme's life and ministry. Converted and baptised in his late 30s, he decided to leave the army. He was sent to Bolobo for pastoral training, but did not stay the course. Given the charge of a new church at Maluku, he founded several daughter groups during an eleven-year ministry.

Like most people Pastor Mbieme had his times of discouragement, but his steady faith and joy in the Lord enabled him to bounce back.

Appointed to Bwantaba on the Bateke plateau, Pastor Mbieme accepted the challenge and the hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, as did his wife. With the water supply a distant stream down a steep hill, the main road five miles away, the nearest market two miles further on, the need to grow their own food and no school for the children, life in the village was not easy.

From Bwantaba the pastor would cycle the 25 miles to Ngwene, and to other villages, to preach and serve communion. He did so even when Mobutu's troops were fleeing the advancing AFDL forces, and found himself cycling home against the flow. Each group of soldiers threatened him, but he pressed on, reach-ing Bwantaba to find that his wife and most of the villagers had fled for safety. Only when things were quiet did he follow them to bring them home.

Like most people Pastor Mbieme had his times of discouragement, but his steady faith and joy in the Lord enabled him to bounce back. He was as pleased as Punch to work with missionaries, as his father had done many years previously at Bolobo. From him he gleaned useful tips as to how to rub along with them. Like, "Don't bother them too early in the morning – they tend to be ratty," and, "Try to respect time – they live by the clock."

No, two years is not long to exercise an effective ministry, yet the memory of Pastor Mbieme's faith, commitment and courage will continue to inspire others for a long time to come.

Owen Clark is a church worker with BMS.

Born to be

India Action Team
1997/1998
Louise Taylor far left

For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.
My frame was not hidden from you
when I was made in the secret place.
When I was woven together in the depths of the earth,
your eyes saw my unformed body.
All the days ordained for me
were written in your book
before one of them came to be.
(Psalm 139:13-16)

These verses came a live for me in India when I was unexpectedly asked if I wanted to observe a caesarian section. The whole experience made a dramatic impact on me – a tension between intense joy and intense sadness, a mingling, a confusion.

To watch as the surgeon skilfully performed his job was fascinating. The intricacy amazed me and I began to feel a deep sense of wonder at the 'knitting together' of a baby. To watch the baby emerge was like being witness to a miracle. The psalmist's words that the baby is 'wonderfully made' contained a new depth for me. It is so easy to take life for granted, it is all around us, everywhere we look and this can perhaps cheapen it. But at this moment, I saw life in its true and God given perspective. This perfect new life was his gift. I watched this little girl, totally absorbed by her as she took her first breaths. Watching her, I noticed all her tiny, perfectly formed features. She was perfect and beautiful! As I thought about the beauty and potential of this little girl's life, I began to wonder what the future held for her. I thought of God's love and plans for her and the excitement of having a whole life spanned out before her.

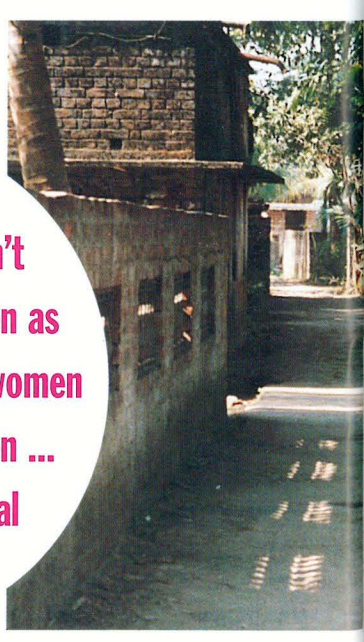
All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. (v16)

"The base is more important than the face" was the surgeon's sobering comment. My previous reflections were shaken into harsh reality when the baby was taken out to the father. He realised it was a girl and walked away speechless, physically turning his back on her, his disappointment unashamedly displayed. What a rejection of such a perfect, beautiful gift! I felt like a blow had been struck and deep sadness.

Indian culture traditionally doesn't value girls and women as highly as our own. Due to the dowry system, women are a financial burden, daughters drain the finances, sons are a financial asset. Sons are the important ones, the ones who will be educated and the ones with rights.

I couldn't help but wonder what would happen to this beautiful baby girl. She has so much potential, but will she ever know it? An even more scary thought, fuelled by my reading on female infanticide in India was, will she even survive? Struck by the fragility of life, all I could do in this situation was to pray

Indian culture traditionally doesn't value girls and women as highly as our own .... women are a financial burden ... sons are a financial asset



shunned

"All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be."

for her, for her protection, future and that she would be loved and know God's love and value for her.

Through this experience I realised in a powerful way and for the first time, that life is a gift and the wonder and beauty of life. We are entrusted with life, as these parents were with their children and the realisation of our responsibility to make others aware of God's value and love for them is very strong to me. On the other side, there is beauty in being aware of God's presence (Ps 139:7-10) and no matter what human trustees of life do, or neglect to do, God never lets go of that life. He loves each individual and each life is precious to him. The moment this little girl was born, even before, she was precious to him. ●

Louise Taylor was part of the 1997/98 India Action Team

Where are they now?

...Allison Lockhart (née McNeill)

Allison continues to use her experiences in France to educate and encourage others to be involved in world mission in a variety of ways. As part of a BMS "Mission Matters" team headed up by BMS Scotland Co-ordinator, Derek Clark, Allison tours churches across Scotland, leading meetings and sharing ideas for how people can be practically involved. "It's a challenge," she says, "as we have to be living up to what we're preaching."

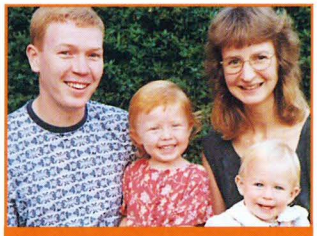
Married in 1994, Allison and her husband Ken are the proud parents of eight-month-old Andrew and are both involved in the work of their church, Partick Baptist Church, Glasgow. They are joint church treasurers and Allison is also a deacon, but she is willing to turn her hand to anything. "Being a church treasurer is something I'd never considered," she says. But the need arose and she was willing to learn.

Allison is keen to serve the Lord in every situation and actively seeks out new openings. Running the church coffee mornings is an excellent form of outreach into her local community, she is hoping to become involved in the church youth work and, as a young mum, is busy building a new circle of social contacts which she hopes will open up further opportunities for witness.

Of it all though it is possibly becoming a mother which has made the most impact on her life. Allison says: "More changes than I had ever thought possible. My outlook and faith are different. I have more to trust God for now – I have to trust him for the future."

Prayer focus

BRAZIL



Andy and Linda Eaves
Fortaleza, ITALY

Colin and Marcia Pavitt
Eldorado, BRAZIL

Mary Parsons
Fortaleza, BRAZIL

Andy has been heading up the distribution of emergency food aid from his church to areas of north-east Brazil severely hit by drought. Harvests have been crippled and those living in rural areas are at great risk. Linda accompanied him on one of his recent trips and she writes:
"The memory of one young boy and his mother still haunts me. The woman was shelling the beans she had harvested on the mud floor of her house, and Andy asked her how many months the beans would last her. She laughed and said they'd probably last two weeks. And then what? 'Only God knows' was her reply. Her drinking water was sedimented sludge from the dried up pond."

Please pray:

- **for all those who are involved in agricultural and development projects, trying to ensure that future droughts do not result in such devastating effects**

For a long time now, Colin and Marcia have been planning a project, to take children off the streets. In Brazil the education system is run in two shifts with some children studying in the mornings and others in the afternoon. Generally both parents need to work all day, so most children are at a loose end for at least half of the day. The town council runs an all day centre for under-sevens, so Colin and Marcia want-ed to provide something for the seven to 14s.

Pojecto Crianca (children's project) opened on 1 June. Local ladies – all volunteers – each give one or two afternoons per week. The programme includes extra school work, Portuguese, maths, gardening, art, crafts, hygiene, domestic work, sports and Christianity. The project has begun with just 15 children, but as most of these children are poor and behind in their schooling, the project is vitally important to them.

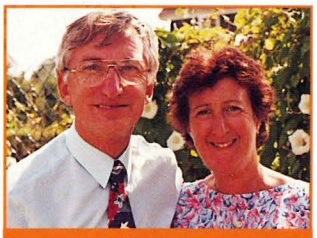
Please pray:

- **for Marcia and her colleague Precilia who are responsible for the organisation and administration**
- **both for the ladies who volunteer their time and for the children**
- **that this venture will find the support to be able to grow and so reach others**

Mary attends Edson Queiroz Baptist Church, a little church with a big vision. The church runs a project known as CEAME which sees around 150 children sponsored through Compassion International. The project offers formal education for many children and backup for those who attend other schools. It also offers courses in computing, English and music and now sells take-away meals, Monday to Friday. This venture has given work to six people, and valuable work experience to many teenagers and children. As few of the church members have permanent jobs and there is no unemployment benefit in Brazil, this venture offers invaluable support to many families.

Please pray:

- **for the continued success of this project which is helping so many people**
- **also for Pastor Marcos who has given up his regular job so that he can devote more time to the project and the church**



Stan and Maureen Porter
Curitiba, BRAZIL

The Porters returned to the UK in July

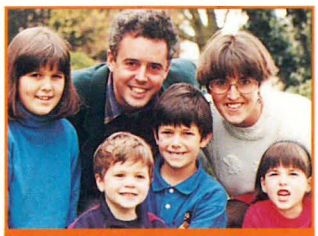
News from BMS colleagues and partners around the world to complement the BMS Prayer Guide

after nearly 20 years of service in Brazil. They are pleased that all aspects of the work they have been involved in have been taken over by nationals and will be praying for its development. Although their future is uncertain, they know the Lord will guide them. Remembering their return from Brazil in 1972 they say: "we had two children, and little more than two suitcases, and no home – but God had his plan for us, so we look forward to the next stage; 25 years older, less energy, but the same enthusiasm for mission!"

Please pray

- **for support facing the difficult process of re-entering UK life**
- **that the Lord would clearly guide them as they step into the future**

EUROPE



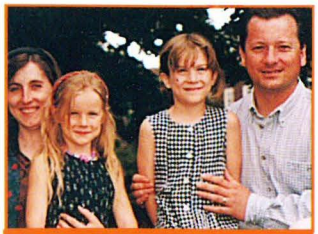
Paul and Elisabeth Towlson
Durres, ALBANIA

Paul and Elisabeth are based at the Albanian Bible Institute in the town of Durres. In the midst of the obvious challenges in this troubled nation, they have also been encouraged by the positive feedback they have received from the students. Leaders who receive training at the Institute are viewed by their churches as being better equipped for leadership than those who are not. One student was expected as part of an assignment, to disciple a small group of people who had recently come to faith. Because he couldn't find such a group in his church, he asked some non-christian friends to stand in for him. As a result of attending his class, some of these came to faith!

Please pray:

- **thank God for the development of the churches in this troubled land and pray for the students at the Institute, that God would use them to reach out to their nation**

Massy Baptist Church is becoming better known in the town and more people are coming to ask the church leaders for help. It is not always easy for Protestants to be accepted as Christians and not as a cult in France. Church leaders Phil and Rosemary want to be able to give help in Jesus' name to those in need. They want to put new structures in place so that they might be able to offer more help in the situations with which they are confronted, ie handicap, terminal illness, poverty, depression, family break-down, debt, and domestic violence.



Phil and Rosemary Halliday
Massy, FRANCE

Please pray:

- **that the Lord will give wisdom and that the church members will be willing to become more involved themselves**

ASIA

After a year living and studying at St Andrew's Hall, Birmingham, Paul and Angela will be heading to Nepal in August, ready to begin language and orientation training in September. Paul will be working as an anaesthetist in the

Angela and Paul Foster
Pokhara, NEPAL

local government hospital and Angela initially as housewife as they settle into the new culture as a family. Angela is a trained nurse and hopes to use her skills, but is also aware of the initial importance of establishing a settled home base. The need for anaesthetists in Nepal is great and Paul also hopes to be involved in training programmes.

Please pray:

- **that they all settle in quickly**
- **for new friendships and good relationships with those they will be living and working with**
- **that they would quickly pick up the language**

TAKE 2

Take 2
a resource for church leaders & workers

RESOURCES *for leaders*

FRANCE

One of our church members was attending his foreign language conversation class recently, in a Paris university, when the lecturer handed out some cards and asked the students to use them to make up a story. To his dismay, our Christian student realised that it was tarot cards which were being distributed.
Phil Halliday - France

We had a missionary family staying with us, following their evacuation from Zaire (now Congo) last year. Shortly after their arrival in Massy, one of the children from this family (an eight year-old) said to her school teacher, in private, "The rebel forces are due to arrive in Kinshasa today. Could I ask my class mates to pray for the friends that I left behind there?" The teacher called for the class's attention and announced to everyone, "I do not believe that God exists. And even if there were a God, I do not believe that we could communicate with him. He has never said anything to me." The missionaries' child was then asked to return to her place.
Phil Halliday

SAT-7 quotes

Here are some quotations from recent phone calls and faxes to the SAT-7 offices:

"Your programmes have had a great impact on our hearts and play an important part in our lives. We look forward to receiving a copy of the Holy Bible, about the life of Christ."
Man from Morocco

"By chance I watched your film about Jesus. I was very happy to see this film, and so excited and enthusiastic about the story. I was amazed at Jesus' good and moral teaching. Please accept me as a friend and help me to know more about your religion."
Woman from Algeria

"I am calling from Al Khoba, Saudi Arabia. I just want to say that I need this channel. Thank you."
Male caller

"Could you extend your programmes, even by a few minutes, so we can get more programmes from the Bible. Can you also send me a Bible – even though my friends tell me it is corrupted. I need to know more about the Christian faith..
Please do not mention my name on your programmes because I am writing to you without my family's knowledge."
17 year-old girl, Jordan

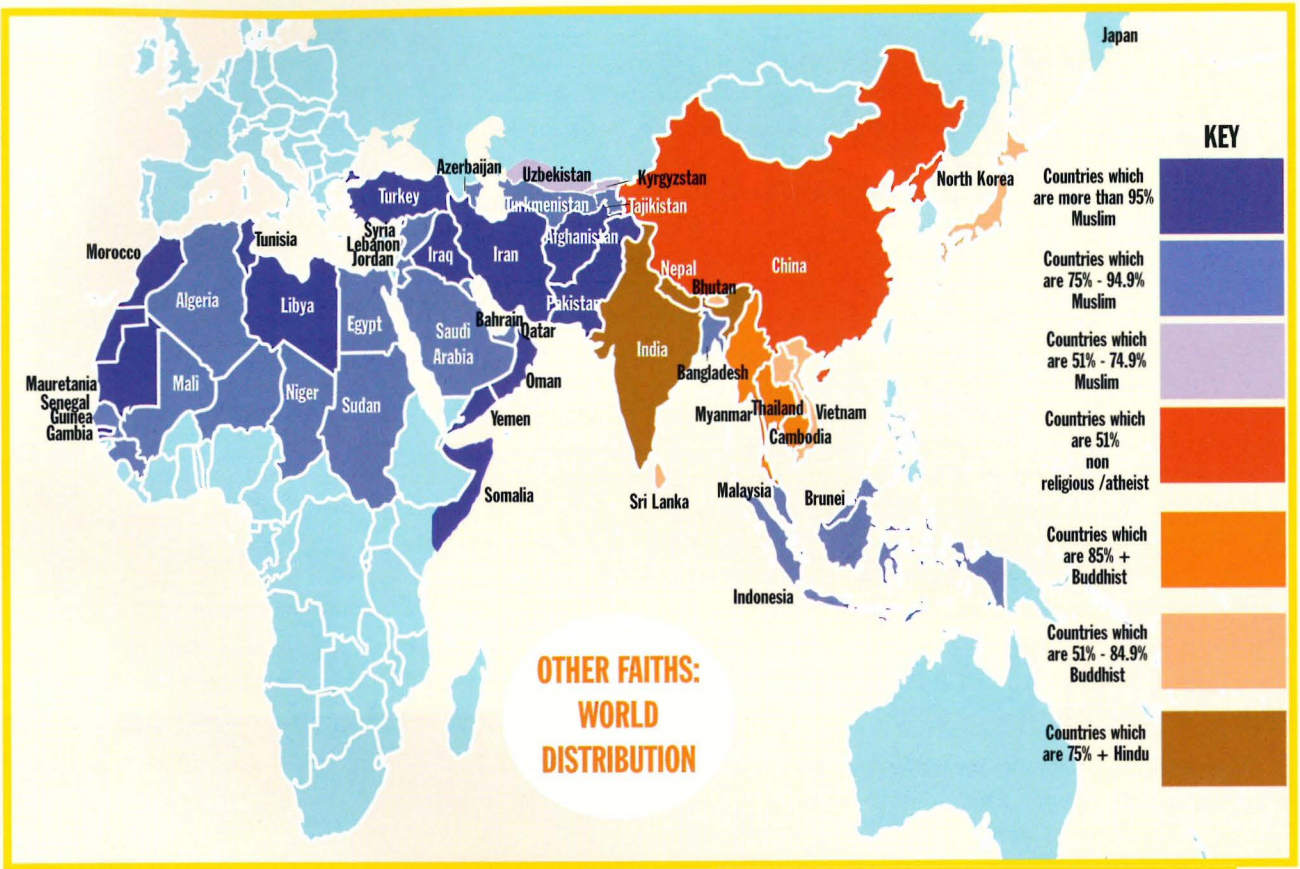
"We were so happy to find SAT-7 – there has long been a great need for such a channel. We hope you can increase the hours. Through your programmes the words of Christ light our path. We hope our children, who live in a society which knows little of Christ, will come to know him and the Holy Bible through your teaching..."
Lebanese refugee living in Denmark

SAT-7 is a television satellite service for Christians of the Middle East and North Africa. BMS is a member of the SAT-7 partnership council.

How to witness to Asians

- Start praying and ask God to give you a love for Asians. Love communicates in all languages.
- Use greetings like "Namaste" to Hindus, "Sat-sri-akal" to Sikhs (truth is eternal) and "Salam Alekum" (Peace be upon you) to Muslims.
- Go shopping at your local Indian corner shop and stay to chat (the best time is between 1.30 and 3.30pm when there is a lull period).
- When sharing the gospel you don't have to beat about the bush. It's easier to talk about religion with Asians than with secular white people. God is not taboo. Be upfront about who you are, why you are there and that you are a Christian.
- Don't be afraid to pray for healing and other needs.
- Invite your shopkeeper and his family to any local Asian events.
- If they are Hindus or Sikhs their children might be bored on a Sunday morning, so offer to take them to Sunday school. You may be surprised that they are happy to accept. Try it!
- Become a regular at your local Indian restaurant.
- Consider living in an Asian area. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us."
- Find out what language is most relevant. There are many resources you can give or lend in other languages eg the "Jesus" video in Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu or Sylheti; it's fantastic as all the family will sit and watch it.

(By Afri Chandra, taken from "At the heart of the community" leaflet, published by Crosslinks, and used with permission)



Predominantly Muslim countries

COUNTRY	TOTAL POPULATION (millions)	% MUSLIM	% CHRISTIAN*
Algeria	29	99.4	0.4
Egypt	60	85	14
Gambia	0.9	95.4	3.7
Guinea	7.8	83.1	4.5
Libya	5.4	96	3
Mali	10.8	86.3	3.8
Mauretania	2.3	99.7	0.26
Morocco, incl Western Sahara	29	99.8	0.16
Niger	8.3	90.5	0.38
Senegal	8.4	90.8	5.6
Somalia	8.5	99.9	0.4
Sudan	29	70	19
Tunisia	9	99.5	0.25
Bahrain	0.6	85	.3
Iran	64.5	99	0.4
Iraq	22.4	95.4	3.3
Jordan	3.8	94	4.7
Kuwait	89.9	5.3	
Lebanon	3.2	53	38.7
Oman	1.7	95.5	2.5
Qatar	0.5	91.4	6
Saudi Arabia	17.1	93.4	4
Syria	14.9	90.5	8
UAE	2.1	84.6	8.7
Yemen	16.1	99.9	0.06
Turkey	61	99.8	0.2
Afghanistan	23	99	0.01
Azerbaijan	7.6	80	2.7
Bangladesh	132	87	0.44
Brunei	0.3	71	8
Indonesia	195	83	12.5
Kyrgyzstan	4.6	60	11.8
Malaysia	19	55	8
Pakistan	141	96.7	1.7
Tajikstan	6.3	82.3	4.2
Turkmenistan	4	76	5.7
Uzbekistan	23.3	68.2	4.7

Predominantly non-religious/atheist countries

COUNTRY	TOTAL POP (millions)	% NON RELIGIOUS/ATHEIST	% CHRISTIAN*
China	1214	59	6.1
North Korea	25.5	68	0.6/2.0

Predominantly Buddhist countries

COUNTRY	TOTAL POPULATION (millions)	% BUDDHIST	% CHRISTIAN*
Bhutan	0.6	70	0.33
Cambodia	9.2	87	0.38
Japan	126	58	2.5
Laos	4.5	58.7	1.53
Myanmar	46.2	87.8	6.5
Sri Lanka	18.3	70.3	7.6
Thailand	59.6	93.4	1
Vietnam	75	52	9.8

Predominantly Hindu countries

COUNTRY	TOTAL POPULATION (millions)	% HINDU	% CHRISTIAN*
India	904.8	79	2.6
Nepal	20	89	0.58

* Christian represents Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox etc
All figures taken from Operation World

TAKE 2

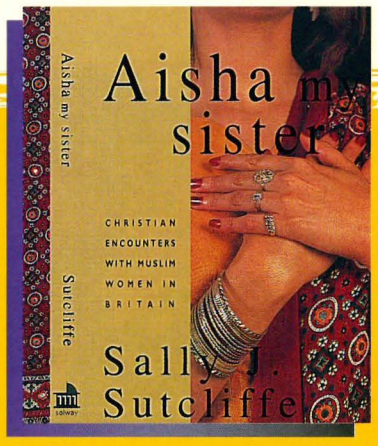
Take 2
a resource for church leaders & workers

RESOURCES *for leaders*

TAKE 2

Take 2
a resource for church leaders & workers

RESOURCES *for leaders*



Aisha my Sister *by Sally Sutcliffe*

Do you find it difficult to reach out to Muslim women in the community?

Drawing on the personal insights and experiences of over 20 Christian women from a variety of cultural backgrounds, Aisha my Sister describes the joys and surprises of making friends across ethnic and religious barriers in Britain, encountering Islamic ways of life and the response of the Church to its Muslim neighbours.

Packed with plenty of practical suggestions this is a resource and study book for all Christian women.

Sally Sutcliffe is Communications Consultant for Ministry among Asians in Britain (MAB).

Other recommended reading:
Ishmael my Brother, ed. by A Cooper, a Christian introduction to Islam, MARC, 1993
Cross and Crescent, by C Chapman, IVP, 1995

Action Cards

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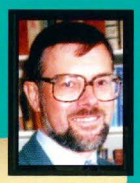
TAKE 2
Action Cards

CARTOON BY PHILIP WEB

CUT & DETATCH

The WAY I SEE IT



ANOTHER EXTRACT FROM THE (WHOLLY IMAGINARY) PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE OF **PHILIP CLEMENTS–JEWERY**

DEAR PHILIP

I am worried about the emphasis Christians place on trying to convert adherents of other faiths such as mine. It surely shows great disrespect to Moslems or Hindus, for example, to suggest that their experience of God is deficient, or even lacking. Also, much Christian mission directed at the great world faiths is critical of what even I would admit to be the worst manifestations of those faiths. However, if that is going to be the level at which the dialogue is carried out, then I could think of any number of examples where Christianity also appears in a less than good light.

Yours

Inderjit

DEAR INDERJIT

Thank you for your letter. You are right, Christianity has not always been practised in a way that is consistent with the teachings of Christ, but when all is said and done, it remains a missionary faith. Christians believe that Jesus himself told his followers to go and tell the whole world about him. The Bible also claims that Jesus Christ has a unique role when it comes to relationships between human beings and God. If that is true, then it can't be true from a Christian point of view that other religions provide a knowledge of God that is just as good, though different, as Christianity. However, some Christians would admit that other faiths do provide their adherents with a real, though limited, knowledge of God. This is because the Gospel of John tells us that Jesus Christ is the light of the world who enlightens all people. What would you say about that?

Yours

Philip

DEAR PHILIP

Your last statement sounds patronising. I find it offensive when Christians suggest that people of my faith or any other are really "secret Christians" when we have no wish to be any such thing. Furthermore, from an historical perspective it would appear that the great world faiths have been singularly unimpressed by such arguments and are not persuaded by them. Christianity can hardly be said to have made a decisive impact in the Moslem world or on the Indian sub-continent. Where Christian mission has been relatively succ-essful, it has been among tribal peoples whose religion is animistic or super-stitious. I think we should just accept that in the kind of world in which we live today religions should simply seek to coexist in a friendly way without trying to compete or take each other over.

Yours

Inderjit

DEAR INDERJIT

If by your last sentence you are suggesting that religion ought to be a force for peace and reconciliation rather than the cause of conflict and division that it has so often proved to be, then I couldn't agree with you more. I am all for dialogue and seeking mutual understanding. But, as I hinted earlier, if truth matters then the faiths can't all be true at the same time. They make different claims about the nature of the world and of ultimate reality. So in the end, I think we might just have to disagree about the rightness of Christians seeking sensitively to win others to their faith, although I hope we can disagree in a friendly way.

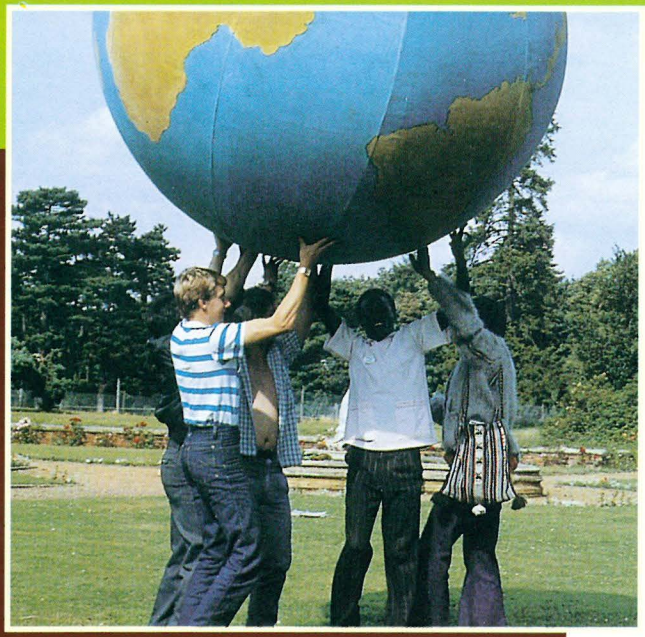
Yours

Philip

What do you think? Take part in this debate. Write to us in about 120 words:
BMS, Baptist House, 129 Broadway, Didcot, Oxon, OX11 8XA or Email: herald@bms.org.uk

Action Card

Shaping our Landscapes



There is a particular connection between the action cards and One World Week. It is you, dear reader! Both are opportunities for 'ordinary' people to affirm the essential connectedness of our world and the importance of doing our bit to improve it. The cards and the Week belong together.

You don't observe One World Week — you celebrate it! Make sure that you do so somewhere this year, 18 to 25 October 1998. The 1998 OWW theme is 'Shaping our Landscapes' which can be taken in lots of imaginative ways, see annual Action guide (£5 from OWW, PO Box 2555, Reading, RG1 4XW).

The theme can also be taken very literally — it is then called civil engineering! We can visit and enjoy shaped landscapes at Blenheim Palace, by a Scottish reservoir, or on the Norfolk Broads. Such engineering is less 'civil' when it devastates the livelihoods of native peoples for the sake of a hydroelectric scheme or open-cast mine. The issues are hotly debated when it comes to shaping Twyford Down for the M3 or the Cheshire countryside for a second runway for Manchester Airport. There are many other examples across the country and around the world. They highlight the tendency of human beings to think of themselves as in charge of the earth, put here to improve on nature — which is true but to Christians only a half-truth.

For a change, send this month's card to a leading secular environmental activist, signalling our support as Christians for what they represent: Charles Secrett, Director, Friends of the Earth, 26 Underwood Street, London N1 7JQ. Even if you do not agree with everything that FOE does, be glad they exist and are critically monitoring how we human beings are shaping our landscapes. ●

BMS, Baptist Union, Christians Aware, Church of Scotland, Methodist Church, United Reformed Church.

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Baptist Group for Christian Witness in a Multi-Faith Society

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- Advises on multi-faith questions

More information from: The Secretary, Revd Edward Williams, 12 Penny Lane, Guarlford, Malvern, WR13 6PG. Tel 01684 569291

JOPPA GROUP ● JOPPA GROUP ●

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Checkout

Missionary Movements

SEPTEMBER

Arrivals

John and Valerie Furmage from Dos Vizinhois, Brazil

Mark and Andrea Hotchkin from Guinea Conakry

Departures

Jacqui Wells to Chiang Mai, Thailand

Paul and Angela Foster to Kathmandu, Nepal

Chris and Sarah Mattock to Carlentini, Italy

Margaret Swires to Natal, Brazil

Gwen Hunter to Kimpese, Congo

OCTOBER

Arrivals

Bob and Ruth Ellett from Butwal, Nepal

Peter and Valerie Harwood from Kathmandu, Nepal

Derek and Joanna Punchard from Curitiba, Brazil

David Kerrigan

Departures

Angus and Carol MacNeill to Sanglaburi, Thailand

Derek and Joanna Punchard to Curitiba, Brazil

The Last Word

GERRY MYHILL

Gerry Myhill is a BMS missionary working in Antonina, Brazil

The area in which we were living had been devoted almost entirely to the production of coffee for several years. However, the fact that the forests were being destroyed provoked climate changes which brought lower temperatures, including frosts, destroying the coffee bushes.

The farmers who had held on to earlier profits were able to buy up vast areas of land from those that had been less prudent, and then plant the whole area with grass for pasture. Soon we saw farms with up to twelve thousand head of beef cattle where a short time before had been neat rows of coffee with just a few chickens, a couple of pigs and one cow to supply the farmer and his family with eggs, ham and milk.

The thousands of cattle being bred in the area, primarily for beef, suddenly brought to light the production also of thousands of gallons of milk, most of which was not collected due to the intense heat and the difficulties of getting the milk processed and delivered to markets hundreds of miles away.

The local co-operative rose to the occasion and built a cheese factory. They were able to buy the milk very cheaply and lorries were sent off before daybreak to the farms to bring in the fresh milk still warm from the cows.

On arrival at the cheese factory, the milk was whisked from the lorries to start on its way through the process of being turned into cheese, the churns being spun across the unloading platform by expert hands, each churn as it reached the far end of the platform being skilfully tipped into a huge funnel with a fine mesh bottom to catch all the bits of stick and straw that invariably came from the farms, as they milked in pretty rustic conditions. It is at this stage that tests are also carried out on the water content of the milk to make sure that the farmer is not adding water to increase his income. One morning the milk was sloshing its way through the wire mesh nicely when all of a sudden there was a flurry of flying milk in the funnel and the workers stopped the flow of milk to discover that the last churn had been full of little fish.

ILLUSTRATION BY SARAH PRENTICE

> . . . " all of a sudden there was a flurry of flying milk in the funnel and the workers stopped the flow of milk. . ."

The following morning the factory manager went out with the lorry to do the pick up, and on arrival at the farm, identified from the milk churn, the manager spoke to the farmer asking him if he had put water in the milk . Obviously he denied it so the manager asked him to hold a small sieve over an empty churn while that day's milk was tipped through it. Sure enough the sieve filled up with little fish! The farmer's little son set off at a run with the farmer in pursuit with a stick. It turned out that the farmer had been sending his son down to the stream to get water to put in the milk but the son had been sidetracking and doing a bit of fishing. The outcome of all this was that the manager simply said to the farmer that if he was going to put fish in the milk then they should be big enough to eat! End result: the farmer knew he had been found out, deliveries carried on as the manager needed the milk and the farmer's son doesn't fish anymore. ●

TaKE the RiSK

All was fine on the island, people worked, played and told their stories...
until one day the helicopter came.

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18 SEPTEMBER	CARDIFF	01792 360909	**30 SEPTEMBER**	MANCHESTER	01274 487341
19 SEPTEMBER	PLYMOUTH	01823 698977	**1 OCTOBER**	LEEDS	01274 487341
22 SEPTEMBER	SOUTHAMPTON	01823 698977	**2 OCTOBER**	EDINBURGH	0141 775 1201
23 SEPTEMBER	LONDON	0171 639 8717	**3 OCTOBER**	GLASGOW	0141 775 1201
24 SEPTEMBER	TONBRIDGE	0171 639 8717	**6 OCTOBER**	NEWCASTLE	01274 487341
25 SEPTEMBER	WATFORD	01353 778984	**7 OCTOBER**	LIVERPOOL	01274 487341
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Tickets and more information can be obtained from your local BMS Co-ordinator telephone numbers listed above, or call head office on 01235 517700 and ask to speak to Ruth Berry. Tickets cost £4.00 each (concessions for the unemployed and students at £3.50 with ID). A group of eight coming to Take the Risk will receive the eighth ticket free. So this is a Risk you can afford to Take.

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NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1998

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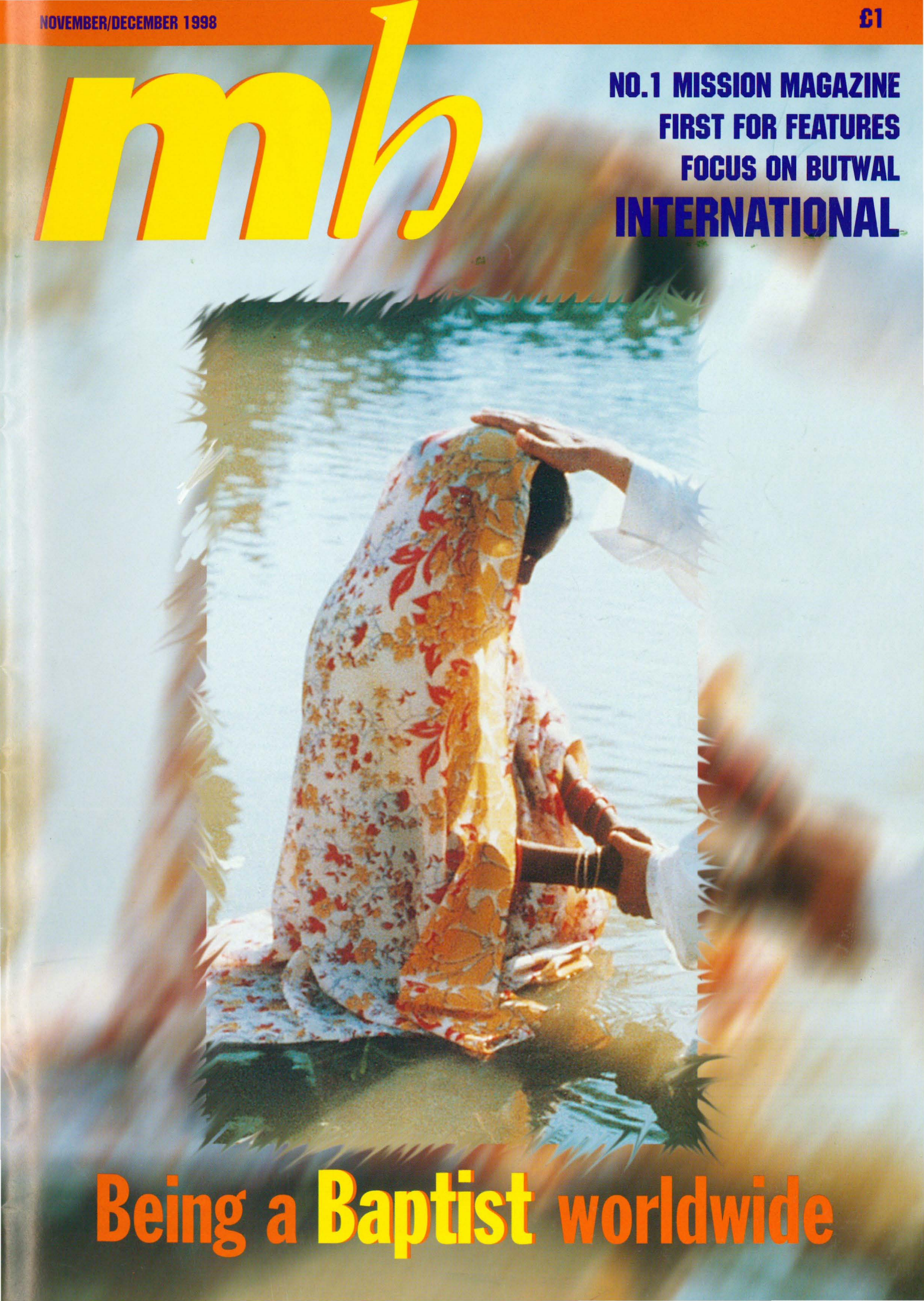

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Deuteronomy 15:10

BMS* Compassion *in Action

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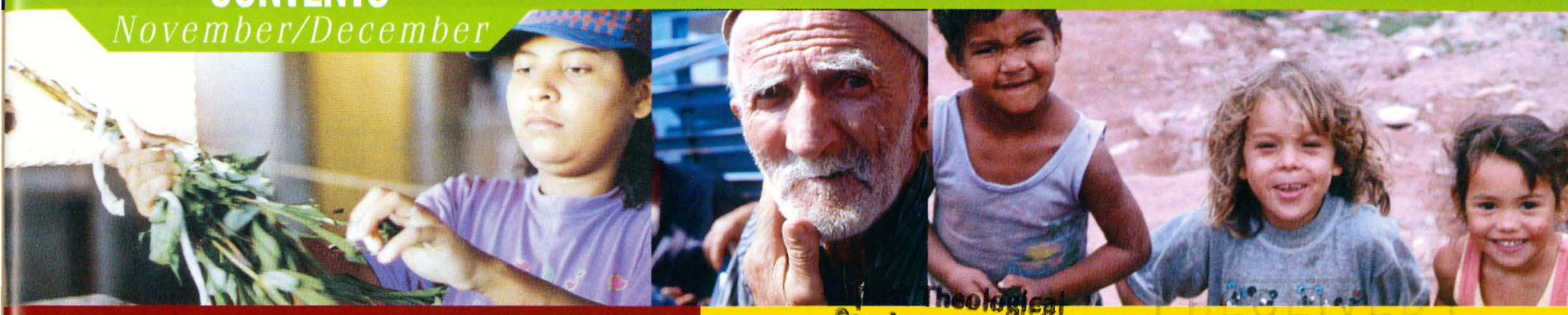

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THIS ISSUE
BAPTISTS WORLDWIDE

Jan Kendall

A year or two back a certain t-shirt was all the rage in Baptist circles. It said: "Baptists are wet... all over."

In this post-denominational age it can be difficult to pinpoint exactly what it is that Baptists in the UK have in common — let alone finding common ground for Baptists all over the world.

Yet certain beliefs and practices, the most obvious of which is believers' baptism by immersion in water, combined with biases arising from historical roots, still give Baptists, wherever they are placed, a distinctiveness.

This issue looks at both where Baptists in the UK stand as regards mission, and also looks at a couple of situations in the world — in Bangladesh and Thailand — where the life of a Baptist is far removed from anything most of us have ever encountered.

We are in partnership with Baptists all over the world, whatever their skin colour, status or credit rating. We are part of one larger Body; a family together. We are exhorted to: "Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep." (Rom 12:15)

Let's take our fellow Baptists — especially those who are enduring hardship and suffering — to our hearts, remembering both to pray for them, and give to their plight (via the BMS Relief Fund). Don't let compassion fatigue take over when you put *mb* down!

And on an entirely different note: if you haven't ordered your BMS Christmas cards and calendars yet, it's not too late. See the back cover for details.

With best wishes

Jan

COVER DESIGN BY CAROLYN TABOR

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NEXT ISSUE JANUARY – FEBRUARY
EDUCATION AND MISSION TRAINING

BMS PUBLICATIONS

East Africa

An American aid worker declared the situation in East Africa to be 'desperate' after visiting Mozambique, Malawi and Zambia. Malawi is experiencing an unprecedented crisis, and by the end of 1999 it is estimated it will have 1,230,000 orphans (mainly as a result of AIDS). This will be 27 per cent of all children aged 15 and under. Zambia will have an estimated 1,656,000 orphans by the year 2000. (ACTION News)

Latvia

A recent opinion poll in Latvia ranked churches as the most trusted segment of society – trusted by 64.7 per cent of those polled as compared to radio broadcasting (64.2 per cent, television (63.2 per cent) and the press (45.5 per cent). Least trustworthy, according to the poll, were customs and excise bureaus, privatisation agencies, law courts and trade unions. Although Latvians trust churches, they do not tend to get involved; only six per cent of the population belong to one. (EBPS)

Turkey

The most translated film in the world has broken through restrictive Turkish laws. The Jesus film in the Kurdish language has been given legal permission for distribution and public screening in Turkey – this is an unprecedented decision by the government making it the first ever film in Kurdish to be given an official permit. One Kurdish Christian said in response to this news: "It's brilliant. I have over 40 cousins and I want to show it to them all." (Open Doors)

Argentina/Bulgaria

Argentina has nominated a diplomat and evangelical Christian, Hotton Risler, as Argentine ambassador to Bulgaria. He is a member of the church called Free Brethren, according to a report in Communicazione Cristiane. (EBPS)

Saudia Arabia

All 31 Christians detained in the recent spate of arrests in Saudi Arabia have now been freed, thanks to high level diplomatic pressure. Special pleading by United States officials to prince Abdul Aziz Bin Fahad helped to secure the release of the mainly Filipino Christians who were arrested following the distribution of evangelical literature. They are now all safe in their home countries and recovering from the ordeal. (Open Doors)

News

News in Brief

Bulgaria

Opposition to evangelicals intensifies

Attitudes have been hardening against evangelical Christians in Bulgaria over the last few months. This is in spite of the encouragement of the meeting between the President of Bulgaria with evangelical leaders last January, promising freedom of conscience and religious conviction.

However, evangelical Christians still face open opposition:

In Sofia anti-evangelicals attempted to prevent Easter Day services by giving notice of a bomb threat in the National Culture Palace on Easter Saturday. Services are held here, and under Bulgarian law, when a bomb threat is received in a public institution, it must remain closed for 24 hours. However, the Easter service, which was attended by around 3,000 people, went ahead.

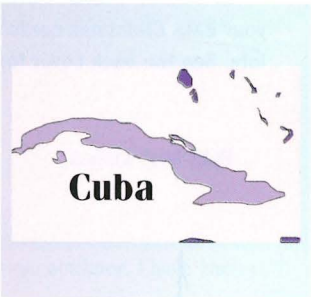
Skin-heads have attacked the church in Vratsa where windows were broken, graffiti painted on the walls and contents of the church destroyed. Members of the congregation also received personal threats.

Four members of a small community of Baptists near Berkovitsa were arrested in June by order of the local mayor, taken to the local police office, threatened by the mayor saying they would have real problems if they continued with their meetings and then abused severely. Among them was a pregnant woman who was physically mistreated.

The Baptist Union of Bulgaria has sent an official complaint to the ministry of Religious Affairs. (BSG)

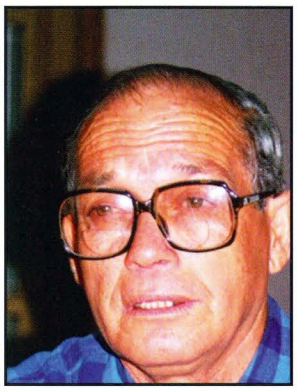
Cuba

Church scene changing



The church scene in Cuba is changing, and, according to a leading Baptist Revd Raúl Suárez, head of the Martin

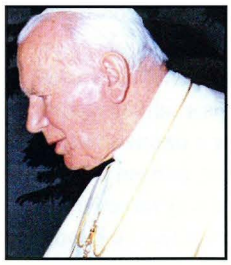
Luther King Centre, "inter-church relations in Cuba are different from ecumenical relations in other Latin American countries. We have our differences, but there is no doubt that we have overcome the classic Catholic-Protestant antagonism you find in other countries. If you go to a Protestant church, you are not going to hear the



LUCIEN O. CHAUVIN

pastor railing against Catholics. That was something you heard in pre-revolutionary Cuba, but not today," Suárez said.

He added, "In Cuba you are not going to find religion 'sold' the way it is in the United States. Churches here do not offer themselves as if they were a product, like Mitsubishi or General Motors. Cuban churches are



not into selling the gospel."

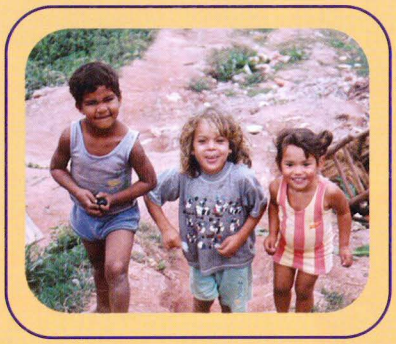
The Pope's visit last January was a high point in the ecumenical and church-state relations. Pastors of many Protestant churches rescheduled Sunday services so their members could take part in the Pope's outdoor mass. Suarez believes the most lasting impact of the Pope's visit may be a greater understanding of religion among Cuba's 11 million population.

In the months before the visit, both Catholic and Protestant churches took advantage of an influx of religious material to educate people in gospel basics.

Alejandro Dausá, head of the Martin Luther King Centre's socio-theological programme has commented: "Churches are full on Saturdays and Sundays. People want to read about religion and spirituality. There is a hunger for information." (LAP)

Alistair Brown

Equal rights?



The picture shows three gorgeous children. The girls are turning on the charm for me with beautiful smiles, while the lad looks puzzled. 'Why take photographs here?' he's probably asking.

The scene is Brazil but not one of its beauty spots. It's a favela in São Paulo. These three live there, playing on refuse heaps and scampering among open sewers. Their homes are higgledy-piggledy buildings precariously perched on the side of a hill. They're poor but not destitute. They have a little education, but next to no career choices.

Hardly any Christians go to favelas with the gospel. They're not attractive, not wealthy, not easy. There are simpler places to start churches. But God made those kids, and the millions of others like them. He loves them as much as the richest and cleverest, and they have equal rights to hear of Jesus. May God pour his love into and through us so that *all* can know the gospel. ●

Nigeria
Self-help students build their own college

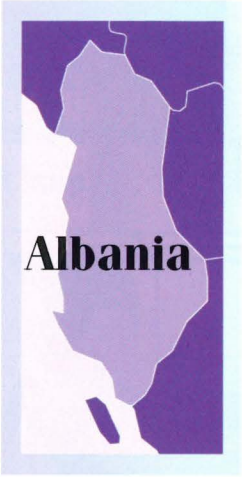
ACTION PARTNERS

When the Bible College at Gindri, Nigeria realised they had grown beyond their present building they took an unusual approach to the problem of growth. They resisted the temptation to appeal to the West for funds and began to build extra accommodation from mud bricks.

Last September the College, which trains Christian workers for the rapidly growing church in Nigeria, had 31 students joining the first year of a four year diploma programme, and for the first time they had students in all four years of the programme. This year first year students have had to leave their families behind to enrol in the college, because of lack of accommodation. The College looked for a solution to the problem: in faith they decided to do what they could do and resolved to trust God to provide what was needed. Despite a →

WORLD News

chronic shortage of funds, in December 1997 the students spent two weeks making 75,000 mud bricks to build the accommodation blocks required. The foundations were dug, and now ten units are due to be completed before the rains come. (AP)



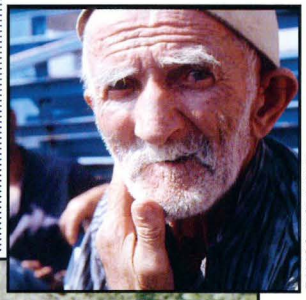
Albania

Albanian believers help refugees

Members of the Albanian Evangelical Community (known as VUSH) – including Baptists – are continuing to provide help for Albanians and refugees fleeing to northern Albania from the Kosovo region of Yugoslavia.

Through an international relief effort, evangelicals were asked to provide clothing for the affected people and transport it to the Albanian border where refugees are coming in daily. Shipments of clothing have arrived and volunteers from evangelical churches are sorting the clothing in Tirana and packaging assortments of adult and children's clothing for transport to the border area.

An area team then distributes the clothing: this is done carefully, though not directly through a local congregation for security reasons. Even so, their efforts are hampered. Local gunmen in northern Albania and organised local crime groups have stolen cars and aid supplies in an effort to make money from the situation. (EBPS)



PANOS PICTURES

EPA PHOTO EPA/LOUISIA GOULIAMAKI

USA

Don't dress the devil in black

A group of missionaries went back to school recently to learn new ways of stopping people on street corners and drawing crowds to present the gospel.

Drama and music have been effectively used for three decades by international evangelism teams to draw crowds of passers-by and present the gospel everywhere from the capitals of Europe to remote South American villages, but according to the organisers of the Creative Keys to Outreach workshop, it's time for some new ideas.

"The arts can be used to present the gospel in a powerful way," said B J Johnston of YWAM's University of the Nations College of the Arts, who organised the workshop. "But there is a danger of us relying on past glories. The world is changing, and we need to be looking for new ways to communicate to new generations and new societies."

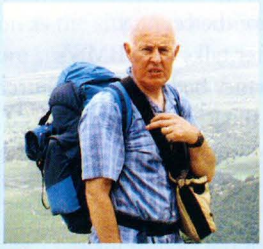
Johnston also spoke about the great need for research and cultural sensitivity, recognising that what is acceptable in one part of the world may not be appropriate in another.

"For example, to some, black is a sign of purity, so having a drama where a devil figure is dressed in black could send a very mixed message. You can't just take something that worked here and transplant it to another culture and assume it will have the same meaning or impact. Taking the time to accurately research the people and culture of your host country is absolutely essential if you want to effectively communicate the truth" he said. (YWAM News)

Inspiration, motivation, ideas, news on world mission for churches

World Mission Link

High Hopes



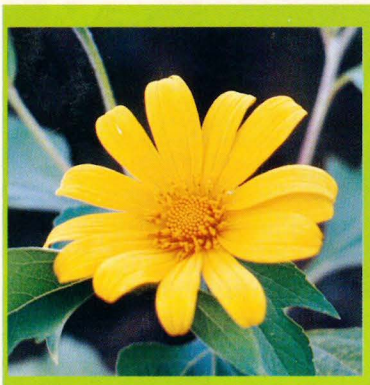
BBC cameraman Geoffrey Hawkes has just returned from Nepal. He set out four weeks previously aiming to walk 300 miles with fellow Baptist Colin Smith, starting and finishing at Pokhara to raise funds for BMS. Except he only clocked up 25 miles.

Geoff's plans were curtailed when he fell and injured his knee in the early stages of the trek. The nearest telephone was a day's walk away and Geoff found himself stranded in an isolated farmhouse for three days before being rescued by helicopter.

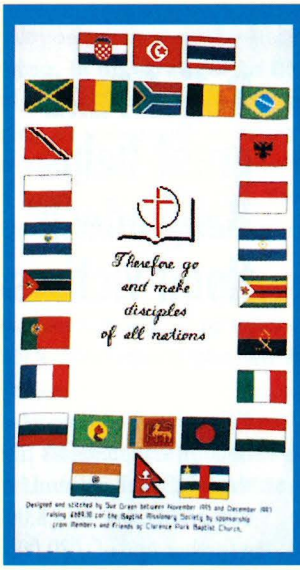
Geoff is now back in the UK and recovering at home after having surgery at Stoke Mandeville Hospital.

He says of his experience: "Nepal was a marvellous experience. The people and the scenery were marvellous. I would recommend anyone with the energy and a sense of adventure to go there, but take my advice and don't go during the monsoon time!"

What You've been Doing For World Mission



Ampthill Baptist Church held a flower festival on the theme of the World Cup. They raised £750 for BMS.



X stitch

Sue Green at Clarence Park Baptist Church Weston-Super-Mare has designed a cross stitch banner incorporating the flags of all the countries in which BMS is working. She was sponsored to complete the banner flag by flag thus raising £689 for BMS.

Dates for your Diary

Events & Meetings

Wellington
Sat 21 Nov
Western Association Missionary Secretaries Training and Information Day
Wellington Baptist Church
More Information: Phil Hindle
01823 698977

Leicester
Sat 2 Jan
Leicester Auxiliary New Year Prayer Meeting
Friar Lane & Braunstone Baptist Church
More Information: John Russell
0116 241 6299

Cambridge
Tues 5 Jan
Cambridge Auxiliary New Year Prayer Meeting
Arbury Road Baptist Church
More Information: Jim Clarke
01353 778984

Cambridgeshire Baptist Missionary Fellowship welcomed 60 children from the Chernobyl area – all connected with the Baptist Union of Belarus – for a three-week holiday in East Anglia.

Millennium Gift Aid — the Scheme is open!

People who give money to help alleviate world poverty and advance education in poor countries can now find that their money goes even further, thanks to the Millennium Gift Aid Scheme.
BMS can reclaim the tax on the gift – tax that tax payers have already paid in income tax – on donations of £100 or more, (given as one lump sum or smaller instalments).
BMS is able to qualify to benefit from this Scheme because much of its work falls within the Government's guidelines both for nature of work, and because much of our work is in countries designated 'low-income countries' by the International Development Association of the World Bank.
BMS will be issuing more information about the Millennium Gift Aid Scheme and how you can give to it during 1999 and 2000.
For more information NOW write to Resources, BMS, PO Box 49, Didcot, Oxon, OX11 8XA or phone Rob Vaines on 01235 517700.

Prayer and Fasting

Three days of prayer and fasting were called — supported by BMS — following the American military strikes on terrorist bases in Afghanistan.
As a result of these bombings the International Assistance Mission (IAM) have had to withdraw its personnel from that country, and do not know when they will be able to return.
BMS has only recently entered into a partnership with IAM.

News

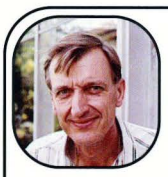
News in Brief

Relief Fund grant helps Bangladesh flood victims

Following the longest-lasting flood in Bangladesh's history, the BMS Relief Fund has sent two grants, one of £8,000, and a further one of £20,000.
This money will go towards the post-flood rehabilitation programme, as well as helping to provide emergency assistance for 3,000 families. It will provide water purification tablets, salt, rice and pulses as well as some emergency medicines.

Congo — two BMS missionaries stay behind

Two BMS missionaries, Steve Allford and John Mellor, were still at their posts in the war-torn Democratic Republic of Congo, as other BMS personnel were recalled following British Embassy advice to UK nationals to leave the country.
After talks with BMS's partner body, Baptist Church of the River Congo (CBFC) BMS agreed that Steve, who has a liaison role with the CBFC, and John who works with the Centre for Evangelism in Kinshasa, could both carry on under the protection of the CBFC.
But the tension mounts as the world looks on to see how the battle for Congo will turn out.

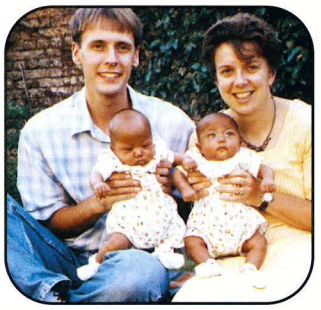


JOHN MELLOR

STEVE ALLFORD

Kinshasa had been under threat from rebel forces reportedly boosted by Rwandan and Ugandan military backing, but subsequently Zimbabwe and Angola sent in troops to support the President Laurent Kabila.
Former BMS missionary Lesley Fuller, who was visiting Lower Zaire when the political situation deteriorated,

had to return to Britain via a Belgian relief flight. She said, "We believe God can use every situation, and it may be that the uncertainty of these days will underline the need to seek his will."
BMS Regional Secretary for Africa, Pam Bryan, is in daily contact with Steve, and he is contact with the British Embassy. Steve's wife, Elizabeth, and children have flown back to the UK, as has John's wife, Rena. Two other BMS personnel, Gwen Hunter and Pat Woolhouse, currently in the UK, are hoping to return to Congo as soon as the situation becomes more stable.



Trimble twins half-adopted

BMS missionaries in Nepal Tim and Caroline Trimble now find themselves in the unusual situation of having one of their Nepali twins — Karuna — fully adopted under Nepali law, and the other — Samjhana — still waiting for completion. They are hoping and praying that the second adoption will go through smoothly before they come back to the UK on home assignment.
Tim works as an Account Controller and Caroline is the BMS Correspondent for BMS in Nepal.

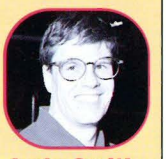
Baptist House News

Pam Bryan

Karen Stow

Andy Voyce

Sarah-Jane White


Andy Smith

Welcome to:

Pam Bryan

Pam takes over as Regional Secretary for Africa, but she is no stranger to BMS. After studying at London Bible College, Pam went to Congo (then Zaire) as a BMS missionary to train pastors in the Bible School. Because of the political situation however, she was evacuated from Kisangani in 1991 along with other BMS colleagues and realised she would not be returning immediately.
She worked first of all in a UK church for 18 months, facilitating evangelism, and then went to All Nations Christian College as Tutor in the Christian Ministries department. It was while she was at All Nations that she was ordained a minister. As Regional Secretary for Africa Pam finds herself in a position where she will be working with very few missionaries, and in only six countries with which BMS has partnership links. However her job is to implement new strategy and look for more openings for work in Africa. "Africa is a continent with enormous challenges," she says "but I'm excited about it as well."
Pam will probably live in the Pretoria area of South Africa, but first of all will go to Portugal to learn basic Portuguese.

Karen Stow

Karen has joined the Finance and Administration Department as a Records and Receipting Clerk, having previously been a care assistant. She attends Christchurch in Abingdon, and says she loves music and socialising.

Andy Voyce

Andy, too, is no stranger to BMS as he came to work temporarily in the Audio Visual part of the (then) Department for Constituency Support straight from studying at university over a year ago. He will now be working permanently as Audio Visual Assistant in the Communications Department. Andy's home church is Upton Vale Baptist Church, Torquay. He lists as his hobbies golf and volleyball, and was the Sussex County Platewinners Champion at volleyball in 1996/97.

Sarah-Jane White

Sarah-Jane has come to BMS as Secretary to the Administration Manager, Michael Quantick. Previously she worked as a secretary in the Faculty of History at Oxford University.
Sarah-Jane was born and bred in Didcot, and is an active member of All Saints Church, Didcot. She has a keen interest in local history and is currently studying for an Undergraduate Certificate in this subject.

Please pray for:

Andy Smith

Andy Smith, Audio-Visual Co-ordinator, who was taken ill while on holiday in France. He suffered what was first thought to be a stroke, but this was subsequently proved otherwise. He was first admitted to hospital in France, and later was repatriated He is now resting at home having undergone tests and observation at an Oxford hospital.
Please remember Andy and his family in your prayers.

What's special about being a

DAVID COFFEY, BILL SLACK, PETER DEWI RICHARDS AND **ALISTAIR BROWN** SPEAK OUT

The conundrum of Baptist identity has been a focal point for debate and discussion for many years, but has re-surfaced for members of the Baptist Union of Great Britain (BUGB) as a result of the 1999 Consultation Process.

We are a tribe of Christians with an illustrious history as a dissenting Free Church. Yet there is a conundrum. That even with a history, a clear tradition and evidence of church growth, some still find it difficult to state without reservation, what is special about being a Baptist.

The reasons are not difficult to distinguish. The resurgence in evangelical trans-denominational identity has reduced the value of a denominational label.

We may have lost a sense of specific identity as Baptists, but it can be regained if we focus on the key issue of meaningful partnership in God's mission. In the world there is a spiritual famine. Young people and children especially are deprived of the basic human right to hear the good news of the gospel in a language and cultural form they can understand.

The task of transforming our mission responsibility is at the heart of the BUGB Consultation Process, so I welcome the formation of the Fellowship of British Baptists and appreciate the supportive friendships it offers. Within this Fellowship there are new possibilities of co-operative mission partnership in these islands.

If we are to face the global challenge of bringing the good news of the gospel to the nations, our identity increasingly has to be shaped by the depth of our worship, the quality of our relationships, a more radical understanding of what it means to be followers of Jesus, and by our sacrificial identity with the missionary God. ●

David Coffey

Can you imagine how small and insignificant young David must have felt when he stood face to face with that towering giant of a man called Goliath? That's sometimes how it feels to be a Baptist in Scotland! Although the largest of the Free Churches in Scotland, our membership of around 15,000 seems minuscule when compared to that of the established church, the Church of Scotland at around 695,000 and the Roman Catholic Church at a similar level. To be a Scottish Baptist is really to be a nonconformist and stand out because of your spiritual convictions. Nevertheless there may well be some truth in the old saying, "Scratch a Scottish Baptist and underneath you'll find a Presbyterian!"

Scottish Baptists hold their convictions with strength and passion. Coming from a land which has been known in earlier days as "the Land of the Book", we have a great love for God's word and for expository preaching. Because our hearts are stirred by the preaching of the gospel, evangelism has a high priority in our churches where visitors usually find a warm welcome and real fellowship. The Scottish Union encourages its churches to support the BMS and rejoices in being well represented by her people serving the

in the UK today?

Society — including the General Director and the President! ●

Bill Slack

The situation in Wales regarding the strength of the churches demands an immediate and positive response. According to "Challenge to Change", the Welsh Churches Survey of 1995 only about 8.7 per cent of the total 2.9 million population of Wales is involved in any church of any denomination. Baptists in Wales have seen 141 churches close between 1982 and 1995, which is a decline of 17 per cent. However, rather than discourage us, these statistics and our current situation have given us a renewed commitment to mission as we trust in God to lead us in bringing the people of Wales to faith in Christ.

The Baptist Union of Wales has appointed the Revd John Robinson as Evangelism and Church Development Officer to initiate a series of projects and programmes to train our church members in the task of mission outreach.

The link between the Baptist Union of Wales and the BMS is appreciated, and I would encourage further developments, especially in world mission to enrich our endeavours. For example, we could identify specific areas where overseas missionaries could serve in Wales, such as with a Somali community in Cardiff or Muslim community in Swansea. With such a richness in diversity in Wales, we can through the guidance of the Holy Spirit move into a new millennium with a determination and commitment in bringing the people of Wales to Christ. ●

Peter Dewi Richards

AND WHERE DOES THE BMS FIT IN?

Maybe it's our history and maybe it's our theology, but Baptists are people of clearly held convictions. We're strong because of that – often it's Baptists who've got things done, changing the face of society and launching mission activities. But our convictions sometimes make us weak – any two Baptists are enough for an argument.

What's true on the small scale is true on the big scale. British Baptists need to pull together and stick together.

Two things help that happen. One is BMS. All three Baptist Unions in Britain relate equally to BMS, and every Baptist church in the country can belong. Baptists are united for overseas mission. We can pool our vision and resources to share the love of God round the earth.

The other help is the Fellowship of British Baptists. The three Unions and the BMS agreed a covenant four years ago which promises we'll work for fellowship and cooperation. We can be honest about our differences. We can help each other with our problems. We can work together.

British Baptists don't all have the same history, don't all have the same concerns, don't all have the same specialisations. But we have the same Lord and same overall mission. If our clear convictions work together, and we have God's help, nothing can hold us back. ●

Alistair Brown

David Coffey is General Secretary of the Baptist Union of Great Britain

Bill Slack is General Secretary of the Baptist Union of Scotland

Peter Dewi Richards is General Secretary of the Baptist Union of Wales

Alistair Brown is General Director of the Baptist Missionary Society

Photographs above:
B - David Coffey
A - Action Team Members
P - Bill Slack
T - Baptist Church Members
I - Peter Dewi Richards
S - Baptist Church Members
T - Alistair Brown

Bangladesh baptists

BAPTISTS AS A TINY MINORITY

DONALD FOSTER SPENT SEVERAL MONTHS IN BANGLADESH, WHERE CHRISTIANS MAKE UP LESS THAN 0.5 PER CENT OF THE POPULATION. HERE ARE SOME OF HIS OBSERVATIONS.

The Mitsubishi Projero parked in the middle of the village and we left the driver as guard. Ignoring the stares of people we followed a woman along the narrow track between the rice paddy fields for a further half-mile. Slipping, sliding, but not too dirty, we took off shoes and ducked into the entrance of the spotlessly clean mud hut. Inside it was dark and once our eyes adjusted, mud stairs could be seen in the corner. Climbing to an upper room a group of new Christians were waiting for us. We sat cross-legged on mats and Revd James S Roy, General Secretary of Bangladesh Baptist Sangha addressed the potential new church. Twenty three new churches were started last year but this one was quite different. Most new Christians are from Hindu or tribal backgrounds. This was a Moslem village.

The Sangha rejoiced but complex issues were now raised. Was there evidence of genuine transformation? Did they really want money to alleviate their obvious poverty? In front and to the right were four men. They wanted to know what was going on and demanded money. When it was refused the village leaders walked out. Later they tried again to corner the General Secretary. The accusation was that Moslems only become Christians to get money so why shouldn't the whole village benefit?

The leader of the small Christian group had a fresh dressing on her head. She had received a severe beating from relatives. The others knew it would cost far more than money to proclaim Christ in their village. Still keen to progress to the next stage, church leaders from the nearest town will encourage and support them. We left that village sensing the presence of Christ and knowing the spiritual battle will be fierce.

To the north of the country lies the town of Dinajpur. William Carey Memorial Chapel is here and that founder of modern missions lies buried in a village to the west. In Rangpur also, former missionaries are remembered with great affection.

There are many opportunities to demonstrate the love of Christ by the arranging of income generating activities such as weaving, farming and shop keeping. This is the domain of SHED (Social Health and Education Development) Board with Revd James A Singha as Director. His staff is also involved in disaster assessment. Floods,

A minority people

cyclones and tornadoes are very common, causing suffering and hardship to millions. They also operate medical clinics in partnership with the German based Liebenzell Mission International.

Senior pastors receive a monthly wage of less than forty pounds. Others receive ten to twenty pounds. Their churches are neat and clean. Visitors receive a very warm welcome. Special guests are greeted with flowers during the service. Afterwards tea and cake are served.

Baridhara Church is just a few hundred yards from the British High Commission in Dhaka. It is in the middle of a slum. A shop selling medicines during the week is transformed on Sundays into a place of worship. The hole in the wall and dodgy electrical wiring don't seem to matter. Recently dirty water has been lapping their feet. They long for their own place. Ministers wear cassocks so that they are readily identified when preaching.

Many attend church only because their fathers did. It causes serious problems for the image of the truly committed Christians who have to demonstrate their faith by their works. Friday is the day of rest and Sunday is a normal working day. Only a few children are seen at Sunday morning services because they are at school. Some churches have their Sunday on a Friday.

Sadarghat Baptist Church has almost every window broken on the north side. A few months ago a crowd of about 2,000 people misunderstood the intentions of the Christians and attacked Baptist, Anglican and Roman Catholic churches. The people inside were fearful but the police standing back on that occasion are now ready to give protection. Thankfully it has not been needed.

> "We left that village sensing the presence of Christ and knowing the spiritual battle will be fierce"

Despite much poverty the church has taken up the challenge of trying to encourage members to be aware of future generations. Concern for the environment is on their agenda and new trees are planted with ceremony. The Easter sunrise service was a spectacular occasion. Over 10,000 Christians gathered on the steps of Parliament. We look forward to the individual churches responding to needs of other districts and countries. ●

Donald Foster was a volunteer worker with BMS in Bangladesh, giving advice and training on computer systems.

The Eurobaptist

JOHN PASSMORE GOES ON AN IRREVERENT SEARCH FOR THIS ELUSIVE CREATURE

Europhile, Eurotunnel, Eurosceptic not to mention the Euro itself and then there's Eurobaptist!

I've always wondered if the creature actually exists. I've met his first cousin, Euro-Christian but despite several attempts to capture and domesticate, it has always been more difficult to identify Eurobaptist.

It's hard to write an exact description of this elusive species. First recorded sightings were in Holland nearly 400 years ago but although having gone there in the search for freedom, were soon forced into a migratory habit, moving first across the Channel to England from where some members ventured across the Atlantic to USA in order to flee persecution and possible extinction. By far the biggest colonies of Baptist (the collective noun for Baptists tends to be Union in Europe but Convention in USA) are now to be found in both North and South America.

Although originating here, Baptists have had a varied reception in 20th century Europe and found it difficult to establish large colonies in a friendly and receptive habitat. Baptists have been variously received during the four centuries of their existence in European countries. At times hunted almost to extinction, persecuted and denied suitable breeding grounds and excluded from the rights offered to other groups.

There have also been times of rapid growth and expansion where external conditions have been favourable (such as the Civil War in England, the new movements of Christian pietism in Germany and Scandinavia in the 19th century and the immediate post-communist era of this decade) when Baptists were able to establish Unions in most countries in Europe until the point today where there are 51 recorded colonies in the wider European area.

The European variety should not be confused with the larger and sometimes more colourful American counterpart. Not only smaller but with some very distinctive markings, the Eurobaptist has often exercised disproportionate influence for its size in the World Baptist arena.

John Passmore is BMS Regional Representative for Europe

home is where the heart is

ANGUS MACNEILL TELLS OF ONE REFUGEE FAMILY FROM BURMA WHO WORSHIP IN A BAPTIST CHURCH IN THAILAND

When I first met this family, they were attending a Sunday morning worship service in a house about four miles away from where they lived. They had walked to church that morning. The church belonged to the 16th Pakh, (or district), and was part of the Baptist grouping of churches within the Church of Christ in Thailand.

As they walked, they had met up with others on the way and, when the family did eventually arrive at 'the church', they were staggered into different groups depending on the walking pace.

I remember them well, because of the time it took the husband and father to find the Scripture reading. He searched for it with painful slowness in the battered-looking Karen Bible that he had dug out of his colourful cloth shoulder bag. Having found the passage, he then read it out loud with equal slowness, his finger carefully moving from word to word.

A few months before this particular Sunday, they had come over the hills from neighbouring Burma and settled at a spot where the flatter terrain of the Kwai River valley takes over. They brought with them what they could carry. They came hoping for somewhere to live that would be free from harassment and threats. Their goods were few in number and their hope was fairly fragile.

Having found a place to live, they built the simplest of split-bamboo houses beside two other equally simple houses belonging to people like themselves. The husband got some work on a nearby 'farm', for which he was paid a low wage that reflected his status as an illegal immigrant with no bargaining rights. The money was barely enough for absolute essentials.

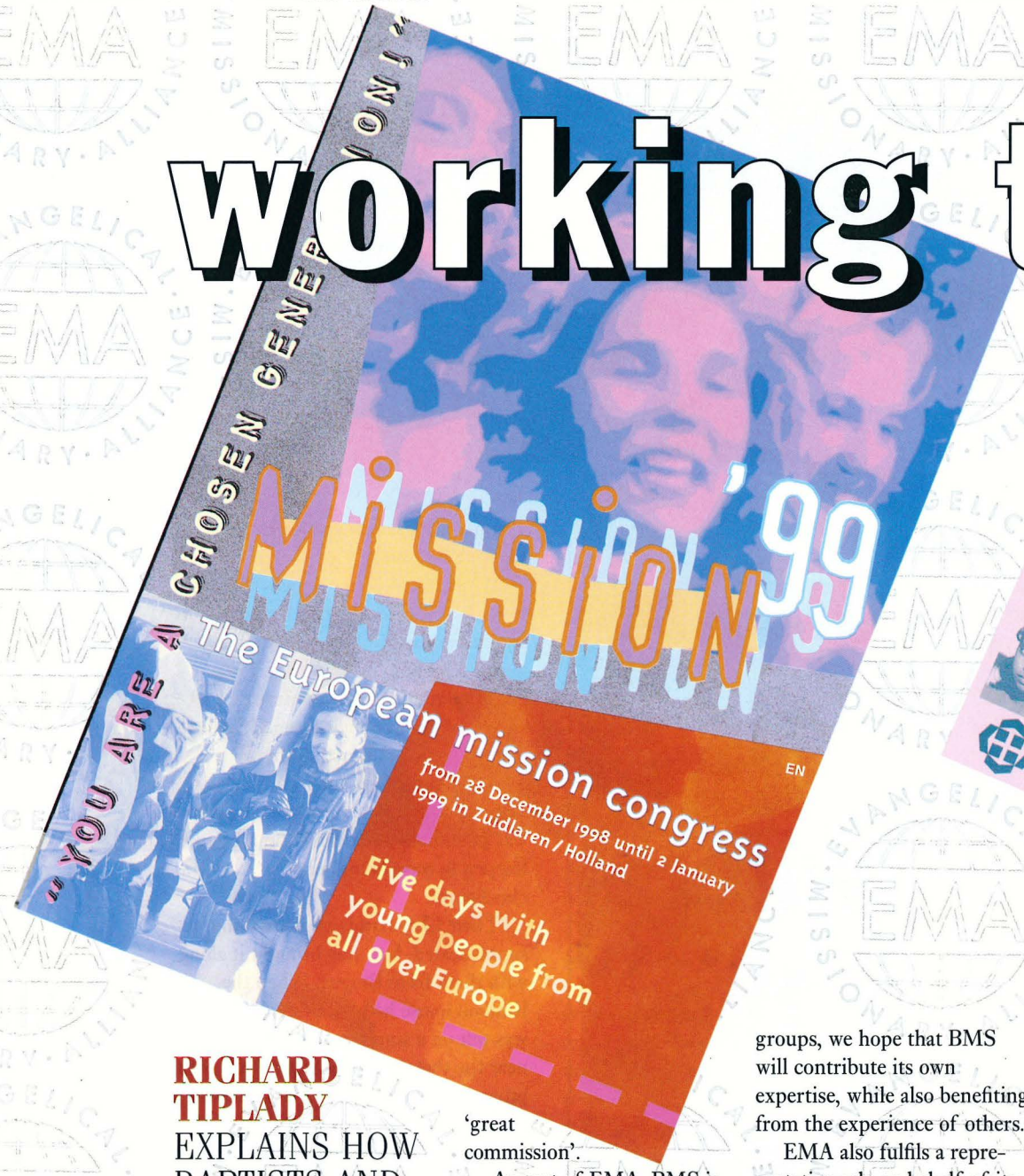
While it was better to be where they were than back in Burma, feelings of fear and insecurity hung over them like a permanent cloud in their sky. They might be rounded up and deported after an unpleasant stay in a detention centre, so they kept very much to themselves. The children could not go to school. Walking four miles to come to church was potentially hazardous should they happen to meet some surprise checkpoint.

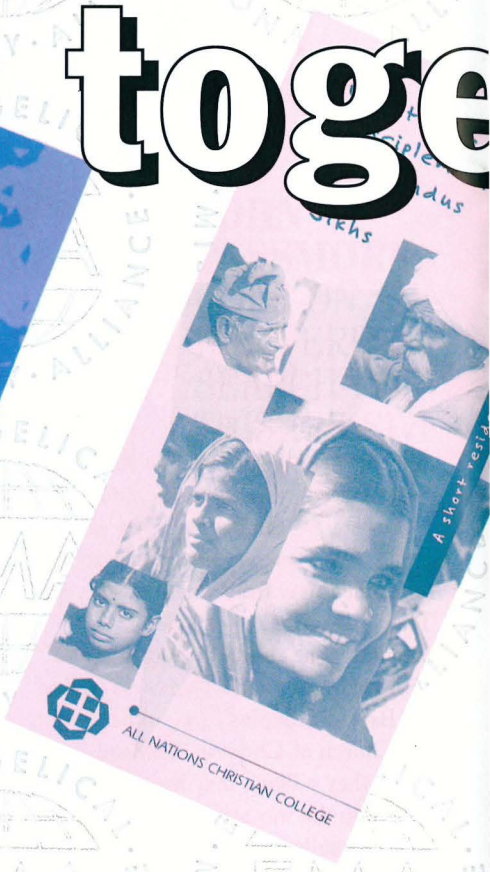
Their Christian faith is anything but sophisticated, but they brought it along with them from Burma. When the bamboo house had been built, the Bible was put on a single, wooden ledge up near the thatch roof, sharing space with other special things like a lamp, a note book, a nice cloth, a decent shirt, and some soap. The Bible comes off the ledge and into the cloth shoulder bag every Sunday when they set out to walk to church or whenever there is a time of special prayer in the house. Only the husband can read the Bible.

Their trust in God is foundational to their way of life. They feel themselves to be the people of God and while they cannot understand clearly why their lives should have turned out the way they have, they hold on to God. For them in their pilgrimage through the 'desert' and their present stay at an 'oasis' where they can enjoy Christian fellowship with others, what counts is that the light of God's love in Christ should still stand over them and that there should be real hope for the future. ●

Angus MacNeill is a BMS missionary and church worker in Thailand.

working toge





RICHARD TIPLADY EXPLAINS HOW BAPTISTS AND THE BMS HAVE A PART TO PLAY ON THE WIDER MISSION SCENE

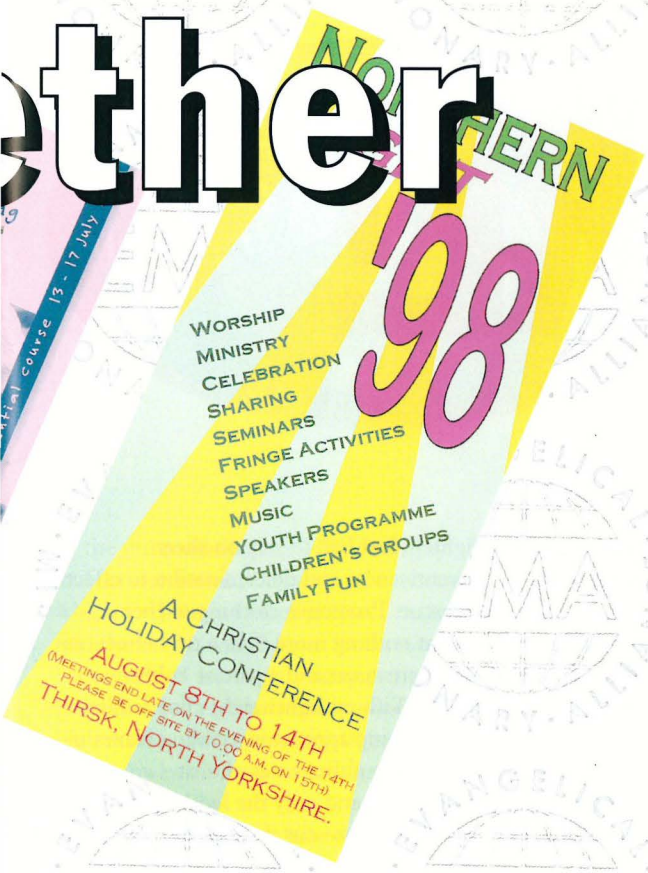
The Evangelical Missionary Alliance (EMA) is the primary UK network for co-operation on world mission. BMS became EMA members in 1996. In so doing, they have joined a network of over 140 different mission agencies, and 18 Bible and theological colleges, all committed to fulfilling the 'great commission'.

As part of EMA, BMS is contributing to co-operative interdenominational mission activity on a variety of issues. The EMA Youth Forum brings together youth workers from a variety of different mission agencies to look at youth discipleship trends in the UK and the role that mission service overseas can play in this. The EMA Short-Term Mission Forum has developed a Code of Best Practice for volunteer placements and teams, to ensure that all such programmes are run to the highest possible professional standards. In both these groups, we hope that BMS will contribute its own expertise, while also benefiting from the experience of others.

EMA also fulfils a representative role on behalf of its members here in the UK. We act as a voice to the UK government on behalf of our members. Missionaries intending to come to work in the UK in anything but the most traditional of roles (ie evangelism and church work) often struggle to obtain visas, and we are working to change Home Office rules in this regard. We have helped Spring Harvest to include world mission material within its adult and youth programmes. With large mission organisations like BMS within the EMA network, this only adds weight to the voice we speak on behalf of world mission to the UK government, media and churches.

EMA is delighted that BMS is a member of our network

EMA itself is part of a wider association of mission agencies, such as the European Evangelical Missionary Alliance (EEMA). This organisation represents, through the various national EMAs, the whole European

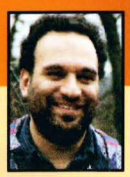


evangelical missionary movement. One of the goals of EEMA is to assist in the development of national missionary movements in every European country. In both western and northern Europe, these are reasonably strong but, for obvious reasons, cross-cultural mission work from eastern Europe and Russia is only in the earliest stages of development. Yet the number of evangelical Christians in some former Communist countries is comparatively large (eg Romania, Hungary, Estonia, Latvia). Given that many of these are Baptists, any hope of such a missionary movement occurring would seem to require their involvement, co-operation and even leadership. This surely is something to which BMS can contribute its influence and experience.

The EEMA is itself a regional grouping of the Missions Commission of the World Evangelical Fellowship. The Missions Commission works to identify key trends and issues which affect cross-cultural mission worldwide, and to propose responses. One recent example is the book, "Too Valuable to Lose", which addresses the causes of "missionary attrition" (that is, cross-cultural mission workers who return home earlier than planned for preventable, and often painful, reasons.) The aim of the book (and its underlying study) is to find ways to maximise the effectiveness and longevity of those working in tough cross-cultural situations. As part of EMA, BMS has the opportunity to work through and apply these lessons for the benefit of their own personnel.

EMA is delighted that BMS is a member of our network. I have only touched on a few of the ways that BMS is contributing (or could do so) to the wider UK, European and world missionary movements. We hope and anticipate that this co-operation will continue to increase, for a mutual benefit, and look forward to a future of partnership for the sake of the gospel. ●

Richard Tiplady is Associate Director of the EMA



Mike Pilavachi

Baptists — a tribal religion ?

I work with christian young people, and anyone who works with them will know that they do not seem to pay much attention to denominational barriers. In fact, many of them seem to see the whole denominational structure irrelevant.

So, is there any benefit to denominations? I believe the answer is yes. As the nation of Israel was divided into 12 tribes, each with their distinctive emphases and jobs to do, so too the one church of Jesus Christ has its tribes. Tribes are not a bad thing as long as they do not see themselves in competition with one another but instead see themselves, as with different regiments in an army, fighting on the same side.

Many of us have spent more time than we should apologising for our denomination, instead of thanking God for the unique strength that we can bring to the wider church. As an Anglican, what do I see as the unique contributions of the Baptist church to the whole family of God? In the main, it is an emphasis on every-member ministry and the priesthood of all believers. Now we all say that but the Baptist church puts that doctrine into practice in very practical ways. In the best of the Baptist denomination, the church is governed by the church. That does not mean that leaders are not allowed to lead but it is the context of leading a mature group of people and not a bunch of spiritual children. And clearly the emphasis on believer's baptism keeps the church very aware of the importance of conversion.

There are many other elements to Baptist life that I could comment on, but a short column does not permit. Let us each rejoice in the distinctiveness and the heritage that God has given us, while being always open to the Spirit who leads us on and binds us together in unity. ●

Mike Pilavachi heads up the Soul Survivor team and pastors a congregation in Watford specially aimed at reaching young people.

FIRE, FIRE!

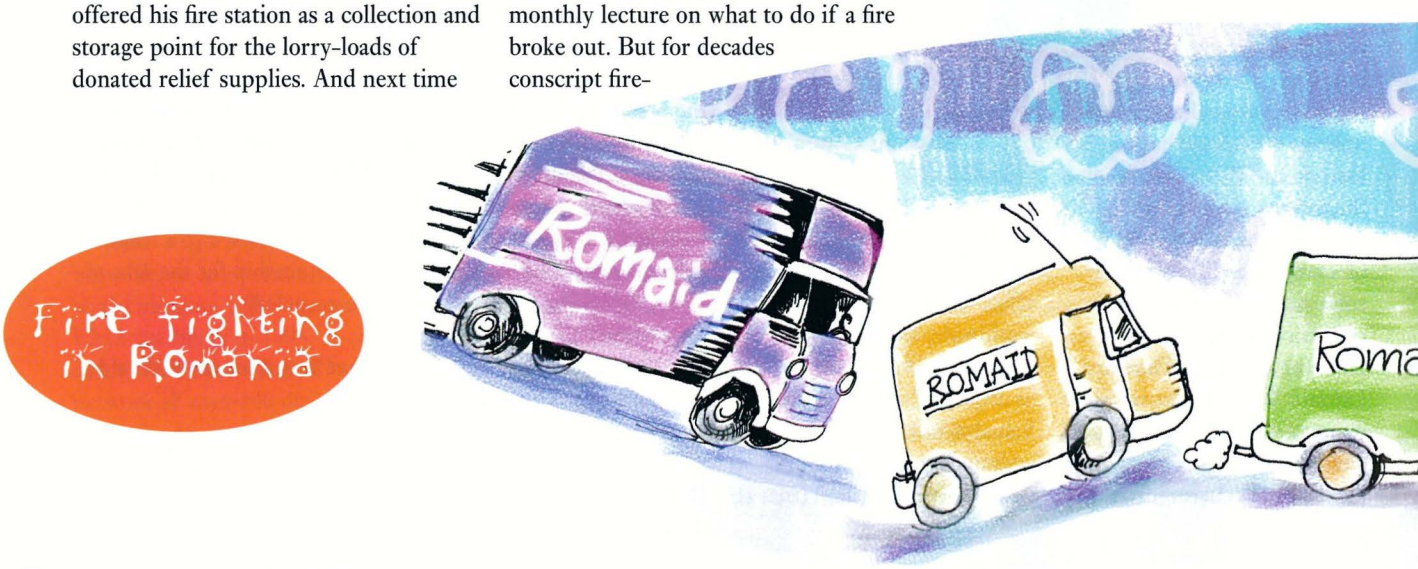
JENNIFER BARRETT LOOKS AT FAITH AND MISSION IN THE LIFE OF WILTSHIRE'S FIRE CHIEF

In the early hours of 20 July 1992, a convoy of vans, lorries and fire engines approached the docks at Dover. Its £30,000 cargo was waved through by customs, and lumbered onto a ferry bound for Dunkirk. This was Romaid – the first of eight convoys sent by New Baptist Church in Devizes – which over the next few years would rebuild the fire service in far away Romania. And all because of a phone call to Wiltshire Fire Chief, John Craig.

Shortly after the fall of Ceaucescu, New Baptist Church in Devizes decided to do something about the suffering of men, women and children in Romania. As one of the church's deacons, John offered his fire station as a collection and storage point for the lorry-loads of donated relief supplies. And next time around, members of his own fire fighting team would volunteer to be part of a second convoy.

So, when five Romanian fire officers came to visit their colleagues in the UK, John made sure they included his headquarters in Potterne on their itinerary. All around the country offers had come in of enough fire fighting and rescue equipment to transform the Romanian fire service in its sworn duty to protect the public. But how could they get these vital gifts safely back home across 1,400 miles and six national borders? Simple – ask John Craig. And what a spectacle that first convoy made, circling the northern city of Oradea with blue lights flashing, the Union Jack fluttering beside the Romanian flag! Smiles of surprise and delight greeted this answer to a very real need, for what the British volunteers discovered was a fire service in crisis. They found that safety awareness was high – every factory worker attended a monthly lecture on what to do if a fire broke out. But for decades conscript fire-fighters had had to rely on sheer inventiveness and determination to effect a rescue. Protective clothing to them meant nothing more than a tin helmet, an army greatcoat and a pair of rubber boots. Without lightweight alloy ladders or breathing apparatus, tackling blazes in high rise buildings was almost impossible, and only the local blacksmith had the tools to cut through the wreckage of a car and somehow drag the victims of a road accident to safety.

Addressing fire crews at Oradea station, in northern Romania, John asked for God's blessing on the work ahead of them all. Romaid is yet another example



Fire fighting in Romania

John Craig (centre) with colleagues

of the international bond of friendship and service between all firemen – a bond which for John is rooted in the christian faith he shares with two of his closest colleagues. "I am convinced that the progress the Brigade is making and the high morale throughout the Wiltshire service owes a lot to a common sense of values" he said.

John meets up regularly with the New Baptist Church minister Pete Butchers to discuss how best to manage change and empower the people in their care to more effective service.

But the challenges are not just operational - what every fireman faces is the trauma of reaching people swiftly through smoke and flames, often compounded by the trauma of having to remove corpses from a burnt-out building or vehicle.

So in two Brigades - first in Suffolk, and now in Wiltshire – John has helped to recruit a chaplain; someone independent to whom the men can come for advice and support without fear of being judged or of prejudicing their careers in any way. "Sometimes we can be so busy we miss what is happening. The Chaplain can stand back and see what needs to be done – always on the lookout for opportunities to share the love of God with anyone who is hurting."

John says he will retire from the fire service in the year 2000. He has seen so much throughout his career - situations of humour and of heartbreak. But he has always felt grateful for the opportunity to serve others. And for the trust in God which has brought him through.

"When you put on your uniform, you never know what the day will bring – what risks, what unexpected challenges. But, in the face of so much uncertainty, faith in the Lord Jesus is a great strength." ●

Jennifer Barrett is a freelance writer.

butwal

Our Town

OUR TOWN
A SERIES EDITED
BY **JAN KENDALL** THAT LOOKS AT
TOWNS AND CITIES AROUND THE
WORLD WHERE BMS PERSONNEL
ARE WORKING

BY
**TIM & ALISON
LEHANE/MACLEAN,
BOB & RUTH ELLETT,
MARTIN & KATRINA
BUTTERWORTH**

NEPAL

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Your bus will have left the cold of Kathmandu in the morning and fought its way through the mist and traffic to get out of the valley. Then all the way the bus will be descending going from the hills onto the plains called Terai.
After six hours the bus reaches Terai. The sun is strong. If you sit away from the window you will be gasping for air. If you are by the window then the air is not cooling, but like a blast of heat. A seemingly ceaseless journey. Then the bus turns towards the tree-covered hills and Butwal.

When the bus stops, outside is a wall of heat. There is dust everywhere. A cycle rickshaw driver is willing to take you anywhere. But his Nepali is nothing like Kathmandu Nepali. He doesn't understand English, but the people round you translate. You climb in the rickshaw with its hood up to keep the sun off, and then find that because Nepali people are short, your head hits the roof at every bump.

HISTORY

Fifty years ago Butwal was a forest and there were 5,000 people in a medieval, one street town. The Government kept Nepal free of outside influence until its overthrow in 1951. Butwal was without any modern amenities; there was no medical care for the people and very little schooling.
In 1957 a far-sighted United Mission to Nepal (UMN) missionary started a technical training school on the other side of the river from the old town. From this training school industries have grown. UMN helped build Nepal's first hydro-power station and this helped Butwal grow. Then the Government built the National East-West highway through Butwal which acted as a further stimulus to growth. The population of the town is now over 50,000.

BUTWAL THE NEW TOWN

Things are freer here than in other parts of Nepal. Ad hoc rules the day, and planning has a hard time. The council makes a valiant effort at zoning industry away from people, but the natural enterprise of the Nepalese leads them to start factories at home.

This natural enterprise has many side effects. Houses here happen; the design is modified during building. Householders must make their own water connection and pipes are taken across roads in trenches, but as it may be dug up again, the asphalt is not replaced.

"TOWN WITHOUT A FUTURE"

A national newspaper report entitled "Town without a future" tells of a survey of the hills surrounding Butwal carried out about two years ago, concluding that the hillsides were unstable an all three hill-sided sides of the town.

In late August a small landslide hit the north-east corner of Butwal and took away four houses; no one was killed. Four days later we had a major downpour of rain causing the landslide to advance rapidly, during the course of which an elderly, handicapped man was killed.

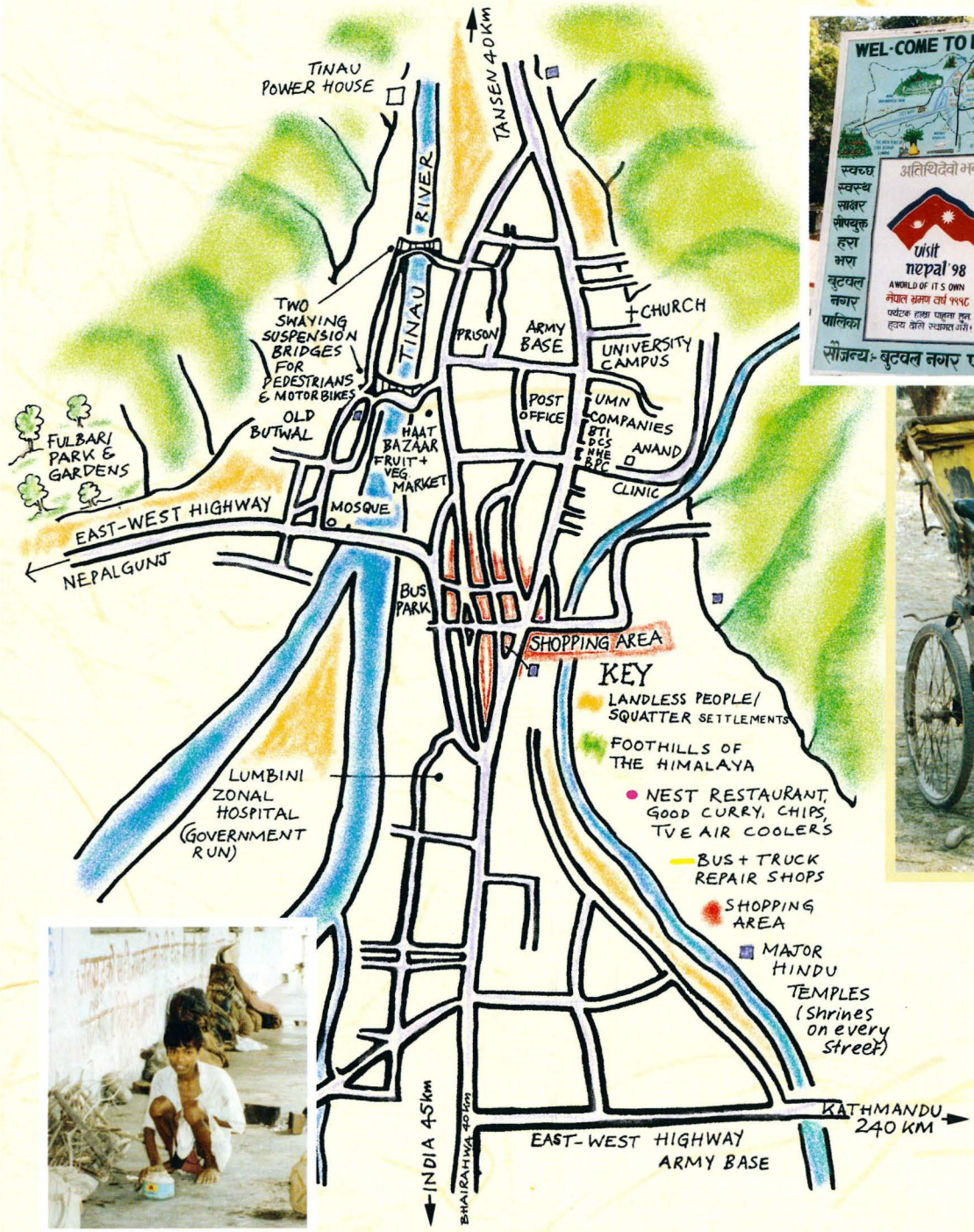
The next day an even heavier downpour lasting between two and three hours brought more rocks and mud down the steep hillside. Forty two houses have been destroyed and 166 people made homeless. Even if the rains have stopped for this year, next year's monsoon will make this landslide move again.

HAAT BAZAAR

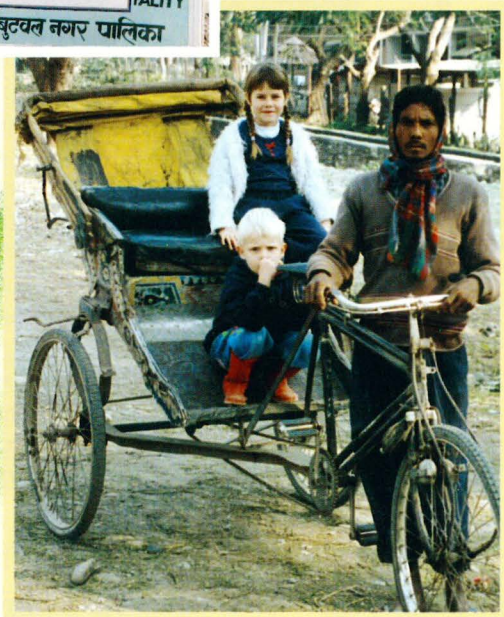
Twice a week there is a market in Butwal held on a reserved piece of ground, close to the river. The farmers come from the hills to sell their produce: rice, vegetables, fruit, chicken and goats. The Terai people bring rice, sugar cane and tropical fruits whilst from Butwal itself comes local cloth and manufactured plastics. Traders from India bring more tropical fruit, cloth and small, everyday items like mirrors.

But the bazaar is not just a selling place. You can have your fortune told here, get a hair-cut, meet friends, and sit in a tea shop and talk. Nepali women put on their good saris to visit the market, since you never know who you will meet!

Rock breakers (smashing individual rocks with hammers) preparing rocks for road building in Butwal



Jess and Jethro Lehane on a rickshaw, the most common form of transport in Butwal, Nepal



Krishna, a street boy

PROFILE KRISHNA

Krishna has TB. He used to work on the buses, collecting money and sleeping on the bus. Now he is too weak to work and has lost his bed on the bus. Krishna is lucky he has found his way to Butwal; one of our colleagues at the mission is helping to treat his TB. Krishna is now staying with a pastor and his family, and is gaining strength.

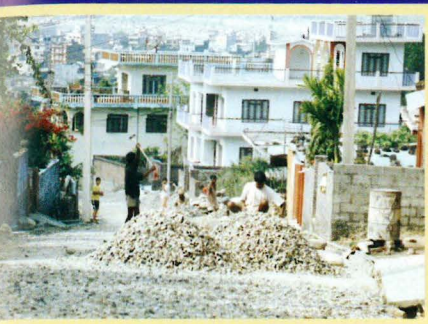
DIL KUMARI

Dil Kumari came to Butwal 19 years ago when the town was much smaller, but she and her husband chose to come because of the transport, the hospital and the market. Now her children go to schools that teach lessons through English, and she is proud they are doing so well. Dil and her husband own their own shop and rent out rooms for extra income.

THE CHURCH

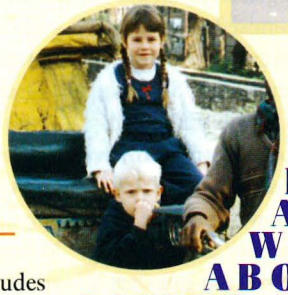
Almost as soon as the borders opened in 1952 an Indian missionary couple started a Christian book shop and school in Butwal. Butwal's first church, Jyoti (light) was started a few years later and has a recognised place in the life of the town. Often sick and needy people are directed by local Hindu people to the church as a place of refuge. The Christian is still less than one per cent of the population.

butwal



SPECIAL FEATURE: OUR BUSES

How is it that in a place where attitudes to time are very elastic, we can have a well-run and regular bus service to our nearest town? Every bus is privately owned and individual, but the route is let out to an owners co-operative. There are strict rules about getting out of sequence, and when the bus behind arrives, the bus in front must move on!



THE BEST AND WORST ABOUT LIVING IN BUTWAL

by Jess (aged six) and Jethro (aged four) Lehane

BEST

- ✓ Swimming in the Tinau river every hot season (March to June)
- ✓ Riding on rickshaws
- ✓ Playing with mud and dirt outside our house
- ✓ Our friends here
- ✓ Cold season (November to February) because we don't get heat rash

WORST

- ✗ People being rude; Nepali people staring at us and strangers touching our hair and faces in the street
- ✗ Missing England and relatives
- ✗ Snakes and scorpions which live around our house ●

Jess and Jethro have lived in Butwal since 1994.

democratic republic of CONGO

With some relief we told the Inama chief that we would begin evangelising his village the following Monday. It had been a long wait, and his folk might well have dismissed us as fly-by-nights.

Six months earlier Matondo, the Mbankana leader, had made an evangelistic trip to four villages ten miles to the south, and asked the District team – evangelist Mputu and ourselves – to follow it up. Whilst agreeing in principle, there was no prospect of doing it soon. We had enough on our hands already, but we did agree to go after the women's seminar, still two-and-a-half months off, and built that promise into our programme.

Just as well, for on the day that the women speakers returned to Kinshasa we'd had a rude reminder.

Inching back up the main road, past the market stalls and parked lorries, whose passengers mingled with local people and the usual stray chickens, dogs and goats, we had suddenly been flagged down by a small agitated man, who leapt from his seat at a table, where he had been enjoying a quiet drink with friends.

"You can start a school in my village and a dispensary."

"Why haven't you been to my village yet?" he demanded aggressively in a hoarse voice. "You promised you would!" Not aware that we'd ever met we were dumbfounded. "I'm the chief of Inama," (a village unknown to us) he added and produced a folded piece of paper, which testified that this was so.

"We can go there now!" he said, opening the passenger door and climbing into the seats behind us. "You can start a school in my village and a dispensary! Fifty-two children, but no school!" His voice was loud and his breath strong, making Mputu grimace. A converted drunkard himself, he always came down very strongly on the demon Drink in his preaching. Now he was more amused than put out.

"We're on our way to Bwantaba," I said. "That's fine," said the chief, "It's a bit further on." It seemed best to press on to Bwantaba, where the pastor would know how to deal with this rather inebriated Authority. His plea for help was valid, but he was in no state to discuss it rationally.

On the way Mputu had humoured him, while putting him straight. "When we start work in a village," he said, "we first preach the gospel. If people respond and a church is founded, other things follow." This only excited our friend further. "I'm not talking to you, *petit* (squirt)," he exploded, "I'm talking to the *mondele* (white man). I want him to go to my village. I'll kill some chickens... and... and... a goat!" Mputu guffawed. "That'll be great. We'll have a feast."

At Bwantaba the pastor and villagers had sat the chief down, heard him out, said that it was too late that day, and sent him on his way. At Mbankana next day Matondo said that Inama was one of the villages he'd visited, and we agreed to go there two days later.

We wondered what kind of reception we'd get. What would the chief remember of our encounter? How would his demeanour be? Those who gathered, however, said that he was not yet back from the forest. They brought chairs, and a good, mixed group came to talk – a few adults, young men, three lads with home-made guitars, young mums and a few

a long wait...

girls. Curious children came to stare. A young man spoke up. Referring to Matondo's visit he said that they had been expecting us ever since. It had been a long wait, but now they were glad that we'd come. Some were Christians, but the church was defunct. They hoped we would come and start work, and open a school. Mputu apologised for the delay, but said we were now ready to start work in the village. Our first step would be an evangelistic campaign in a month's time.

"The best laid plans of mice and men," wrote the poet, "gang aft agley." Circumstances intervene. So it had proved to be. A personal medical emergency. Pastor Mbieme's untimely death, obligations in Kinshasa, all had intervened. It had not been possible to return a month later. By the time our next trip was planned and prepared, one month had become three.

At last in Mbankana again, inching down the main road past the market and the lorries, the passengers, locals, chickens, dogs and goats milling around as ever, suddenly the familiar sight of a small, agitated man leaping from his seat at a table produced that 'Oh no! We've been here before!' feeling. Loud, aggressive and hoarse, he was firing verbally from the hip as he approached.

"Why didn't you come back to my village?" he roared. "You lied to me!" Chief Labi, seated at the table, spoke sharply to him in Teke, and he calmed down. "We were prevented," we said, "but we'll come on Monday to begin evangelisation. Make sure everybody knows."

It had been a long wait, but this time we were ready to start work at Inama.

Owen Clark is a church worker with BMS in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Top of page: Children galore – but no school Bateke plateau
Above: Matondo (centre, wearing jacket) Mbankana church leader, and members with District evangelism team (three on right)
Far left: Evangelist Mputu preaching in the village, Bateke plateau

28:19 ACTION TEAMS

Where are they now?

ALISON WILLIAMS (SRI LANKA TEAM, 93/94)

Alison speaks:

Following my year on a 28:19 Action Team I wanted to go back overseas and work with the poor. I was delighted when World Vision offered me a one year volunteer trainee position.

During that year I worked raising government funding for relief and development projects in Asia. I really enjoyed it, especially the contact I was able to have with friends in Sri Lanka and the exciting trips I made to India, Bangladesh, Myanmar (Burma), and Thailand. After a year I became a permanent employee and was seconded to work in Myanmar, developing a programme to address the serious HIV/AIDS situation and working on a project which helps communities to prepare and cope with the many disasters which they constantly face.

After this experience I was soon on another plane bound for Laos. I've been here for 18 months now. I work with Lao people developing their skills. This has involved lots of adventures travelling all over the country – staying in remote villages where I've been asked questions like "do men have skin like yours too?", and sampling interesting delicacies such as ant larvae, snake and water buffalo intestine.

This all comes to an end in January when Lao staff will be able to take over my role. I'm not sure what will happen next but it's amazing to look back and see how 28:19 prepared me for what has happened since – it was really a life-changing experience and it's exciting to think where God might lead me next!

> I've been asked questions like "do men have skin like yours too?"

Alison's mother Margaret adds:

"Looking back, Alison's time in Sri Lanka had a profound effect on her in many different ways. She loved the adventure of it, loved experiencing a different culture, learned to cope with all sorts of difficulties, and was deeply affected by the enormous needs of a Third World country. At the end of her time with the Action Team, she was delighted to find herself working for Asia, helping to design development projects, write proposals and raise funding.

She now lives and works in Laos. Though based in an office in Vientiane, much of her time is spent travelling to remote rural areas.

Alison is particularly committed to trying to reach the poorest people, often ethnic minorities, and to consulting women, even though this flies contrary to the culture. She visits projects to see how future planning can improve provision, be it education, training, health, medicines, water systems, income generation, revolving loans, whatever.

Alison describes this job as her biggest challenge yet. Laos is one of the poorest countries in the world with little infrastructure. Travel is always difficult and often dangerous. Recently she travelled by an elderly helicopter that needed a runway and where you travelled in the same compartment as fuel tanks, baggage and pigs! There was a notice up: "All passengers are covered by insurance". Was this meant to reassure? Ancient jars of alcohol are cracked open for visitors, deadly snakes cross your path, bacillary and amoebic dysentery result from polluted water...There is really far too much for a parent to worry about. But we are very grateful for her opportunities to respond to such enormous human need. All we can do is entrust her to a heavenly father's loving care."

Laos

(Part of a letter Alison wrote home)

"We set off by small boat to visit some isolated mountain villages. We travelled along shallow, rocky rivers through beautiful valleys surrounded by interesting limestone shapes. Then we had four hours' walk across muddy and slippery mountain terrain, so that we arrived covered in mud and soaked in sweat. It made me appreciate how tough life is for the villagers. It was exciting, challenging and very sad at times. There were dirty, naked and malnourished children. Three year olds were carrying babies on their backs. There were women with iodine deficiency. One 30-year-old woman looked more like 60 after having had 10 children, four of which had died. A grandmother was gazing sadly at her sick grandson who lay listlessly there while all she could do was try traditional medicines and pray to the spirits. Then there was a desperate woman with 11 children, pregnant yet again and told that no birth spacing methods were suitable for her."

Over the coming year, BMS aims to add up to 40 new missionaries and to further expand its volunteering opportunities. With this in mind, we have been pleased to welcome four new volunteers...

Jenny Smith

Oxford based Jenny is no stranger to BMS, nor to Budapest where she headed in September. She served with BMS in Hungary from 1992 to 94 teaching English as a foreign language at the International Baptist Lay Academy and acting as pastoral assistant at the International Baptist Church. This time around she will be using her TEFL skills at the Baptist Theological Academy. Please pray that another volunteer will be found who can work alongside Jenny teaching English and German. Perhaps you fit the bill yourself!

Brian and Wendy Gibbs

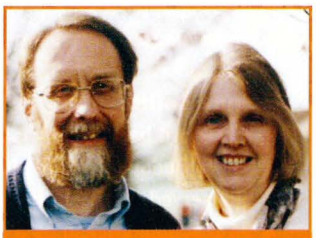
Brian and Wendy are following in their daughter Margaret's footsteps by heading off to Nepal with BMS. Margaret completed her time teaching in Nepal with the International Nepal Fellowship (INF) in September 1997 but before that time, whilst visiting her on location and viewing the work of INF, Brian and Wendy felt they had something to offer. Brian will be using his expertise in personnel and Wendy will be working part time wherever there is a need – such as in the library and guesthouse. The couple are members of Chesterfield Baptist Church and left for Nepal in October.

Joanna Took

As Jo was studying for a lower primary BEd at Homerton College in Cambridge, she became increasingly convinced that her ability to work with children was a gift from God and as such, it should be used for him. With that in mind, her first job has been to head off to North Africa! Jo has been in North Africa since August and asks especially for prayer that she will maintain and develop consistency of faith without the support of family and friends — relying totally on God alone.

Prayer *focus*

ASIA



David and Sue Jackson
Rajagiriya, SRI LANKA

David and Sue have just completed their year of language study and cultural orientation in Sri Lanka and began work with the Baptist Sangamaya (like a Union) in September. The couple, formerly with BMS in Brazil, will be involved with various programmes of teaching and training for adults and, they hope, encouraging those already involved in the work of making Jesus known. Teaching methods in Sri Lanka are very different to those they have used before and David and Sue need to be adaptable so that they can teach in a way their students will be able to learn. They will also need the help of an interpreter at first as even with a full year of study, it will be some time before the couple can be fluent in this difficult language.

Please pray:
- **for continued progress in language study**
- **that they would quickly form good working relationships with their students and would be able to communicate their ideas effectively**

Colin and Denise Clark
Pokhara, NEPAL

Colin and Denise Clark write: "One of the things we have recently found difficult about living here is the comings and goings. Often friends in the same situation with similar experiences can become very important. This is true for us and it can sometimes seem that these relationships are necessary for survival and so it brings sadness when it is time to say goodbye... this year we have had to say goodbye to a number of our friends who for one reason or another have gone home. This leaves a gap in our lives and although new people come, it takes time to build new friendships.

"The local church has a new building to meet in. This was built last year and has been an encouragement which has helped to give them an identity in the community. The building belongs to the church but the land is rented and this is a concern for the leaders. The congregation is still small with a few new faces. There has recently been some helpful training on how to encourage each other in their christian faith in their sometimes difficult and discouraging situations. In the wake of World Cup fever, the young people from several churches in Pokhara are entering a team in a local football tournament. It is this kind of event and community involvement that could help the churches become more accepted and for the general public to realise that there are many Nepali Christians."

Please pray:
- **that new friendships would form quickly and deeply**
- **some people fear the growth of the Nepali church: pray for God's protection and blessing on all national Christians and upon the expatriate workers**

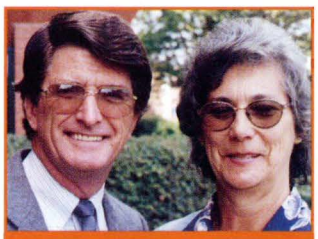
SOUTH AMERICA

Please pray for **John** and **Lesley Moody**, (formerly in Brazil), who left BMS in September for All Nations Christian College where John was appointed Deputy Bursar. Their work in Brazil came to an end after they handled the move of the BMS office from São Paulo to Curitiba. As things can be done more quickly in Curitiba and as BMS is gradually withdrawing personnel from Brazil in favour of less evangelised countries, it was felt there was not enough work at the office for the couple to do full time and so, after much prayer, it was agreed they should return home to consider other possible options for their future. The couple are pleased to return to All Nations where they themselves spent a happy year of training before going overseas and feel they will be able to use their experiences of mission work to encourage new students.

Please pray:
- **that they would quickly settle into life at a busy college and make good friends**

As part of last year's consultation on future BMS work in Brazil, **David** and **Sheila Brown** have agreed to conclude their work and leave Rio by the end of 1999. They write: "We know that the

News from BMS colleagues and partners around the world to complement the BMS Prayer Guide



David and Sheila Brown
Rio de Janeiro, BRAZIL

Lord has a door to open for us and we are to be sensitive to his leading. We do not know as yet where we are to go. There are several options before us but as yet we have no definite leading from the Lord. Pray for us, so that together, we may discover the Lord's will. To leave Rio de Janeiro after ten years will not be easy, especially considering that we will be leaving family behind also. We are therefore waiting on God and obviously dependent upon your prayers."

Please pray:

- for God's clear guidance, reassurance and peace

CARIBBEAN/CENTRAL AMERICA

Peter and **Sheila Brewer** have been visiting Trinidad to represent BMS in plans for future theological training schemes which it is hoped will draw together the various Baptist groups on the island. The couple met with a working group representing several of the Baptist bodies (about half of the total Baptist community) and left a training plan in draft form for their consideration. BMS has asked the working group to arrive at a common mind about a united training programme and to communicate

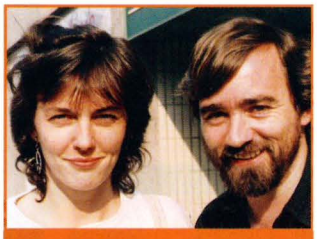
Sheila and Peter Brewer
TRINIDAD

their agreement to BMS by the end of the year. They will need to show evidence that their proposals are financially viable and that there are sufficient suitable students. They will also need to indicate the availability of qualified Trinidadian tutors and to consider how many missionaries will be needed from the BMS and other bodies such as the Southern Baptist Convention (USA). BMS has promised to make a contribution in personnel, provided that the plan is practical, but other partners will be needed in order to achieve sufficient support in terms of finance and staff. The deadline for these plans is February 1999.

As it is not clear what the outcome of the working group in Trinidad will be, BMS has released Peter and Sheila to seek alternative appropriate ministries, without waiting until the end of the year. If the news in February is positive and if they remain available, Peter and Sheila will be heading back to Trinidad to work on the training programme. If not, BMS will look for other personnel to take on this important role.

Please pray:

- **that the Lord would continue to guide all those involved in the planning and decision making processes for this training academy**
- **for the Lord's blessing on the relationships between the different groups**
- **for clear guidance for Peter and Sheila as to whether they are to be involved in any future work in Trinidad or if their path lies in another direction**



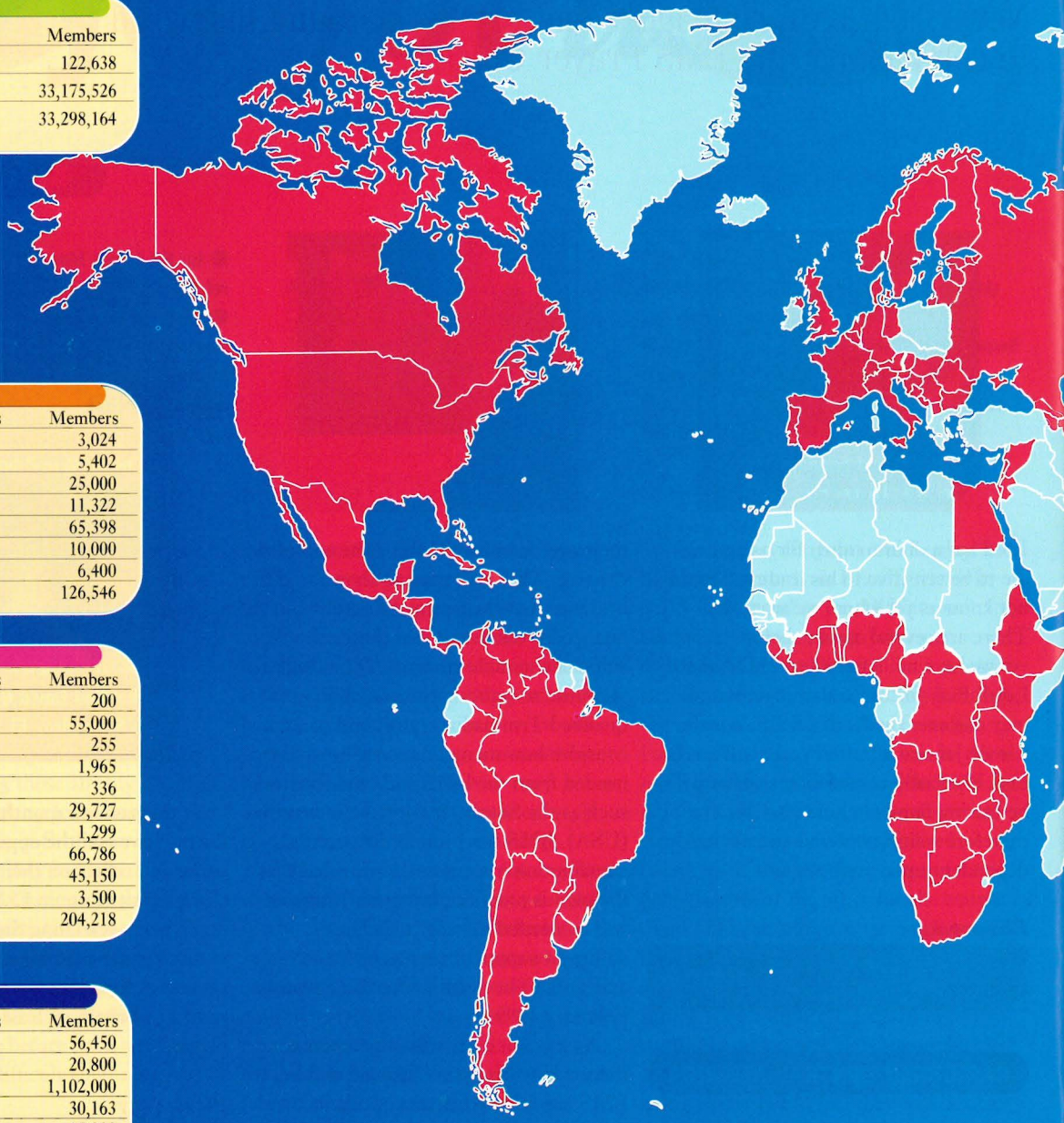
Rachel and David Quinney Mee
San Salvador, El SALVADOR

Over the past few months, David and Rachel have had the opportunity to pause and reflect on their work and the changing situation in El Salvador. After much heart-searching they have, in their words, "made a decision, albeit somewhat hesitant and unenthusiastic, to return to Britain, at least for the near future."

Please pray:

- **that God will make clear their future path now they have left El Salvador**
- **their time working in a society deeply wounded by poverty, war and injustice will obviously affect their outlook on life in the UK. Please pray that the Lord will help them to deal with the contrast and find ways to use their experiences positively.**
- **for their young daughter Alice who was born in El Salvador and knows only that life so far.**

Where in the world are



NORTH AMERICA

	No. of Bapt Unions	Churches	Members
Canada	1	1,150	122,638
USA	14	97,702	33,175,526
TOTAL		98,852	33,298,164

CENTRAL AMERICA

	No. Of Bapt Unions	Churches	Members
Costa Rica	2	39	3,024
El Salvador	2	61	5,402
Guatemala	1	200	25,000
Honduras	1	150	11,322
Mexico	1	791	65,398
Nicaragua	1	87	10,000
Panama	1	90	6,400
TOTAL		1,418	126,546

CARIBBEAN

	No. of Bapt Unions	Churches	Members
Antigua	1	2	200
Bahamas	1	211	55,000
Barbados	1	3	255
Belize	1	48	1,965
Bermuda	1	4	336
Cuba	3	371	29,727
Dom Rep	1	22	1,299
Haiti	2	416	66,786
Jamaica	1	303	45,150
Trin & Tob	1	23	3,500
TOTAL		1,403	204,218

LATIN AMERICA

	No. Of Bapt Unions	Churches	Members
Argentina	1	420	56,450
Bolivia	2	221	20,800
Brazil	2	5,910	1,102,000
Chile	2	285	30,163
Columbia	1	115	15,088
Ecuador	1	146	13,615
Guyana	1	3	1,628
Paraguay	1	100	6,630
Peru	1	920	8,500
Uruguay	1	57	4,500
Venezuela	1	230	25,000
TOTAL		8,407	1,284,374

ASIA

	No. Of Bapt Unions	Churches	Members
Australia	2	825	63,921
Bangladesh	3	833	32,289
Fiji	1	14	750
Hong Kong	1	141	55,115
India	17	8,688	1,544,203
Indonesia	3	463	120,939
Japan	4	346	41,863
Korea	1	2,215	650,000
Macau	1	7	750
Malaysia	1	80	7,000
Myanmar	1	3,640	555,063
Nepal	1	40	5,000
New Zealand	1	253	22,770
Papua New Guinea	1	360	35,500
Philippines	5	2,559	212,643
Singapore	1	30	5,937
Sri Lanka	1	21	2,003
Taiwan	1	152	17,162
Thailand	4	308	33,454
TOTAL		20,615	3,399,080

BAPTISTS *worldwide*

the Baptists?

EUROPE

	No. Of Bapt Unions	Churches	Members
Armenia	1	25	900
Austria	1	19	1,130
Azerbaijan	1	15	520
Belarus	1	188	11,414
Belgium	1	32	917
Bulgaria	1	38	3,405
Croatia	1	41	1,927
Czech Republic	1	26	2,379
Denmark	1	47	5,446
Estonia	1	85	6,234
Finland	2	32	2,120
France	1	111	6,489
Georgia	1	49	5,000
Germany	2	699	91,161
Hungary	1	243	11,026
Italy	1	100	4,622
Kazakhstan	1	197	11,227
Kyryzstan	1	33	3,118
Latvia	1	75	6,147
Lithuania	1	7	422
Moldova	1	275	17,200
Netherlands	1	88	12,253
Norway	1	62	5,216
Poland	1	61	3,810
Portugal	1	60	4,204
Romania	2	1,423	84,078
Russia	2	1,431	101,530
Serbia	2	64	2,187
Slovak Republic	1	15	1,984
Slovenia	1	4	150
Spain	1	71	8,195
Sweden	1	278	18,631
Switzerland	1	15	1,291
Ukraine	2	2,537	133,337
United Kingdom	3	2,823	188,263
Uzbekistan	1	37	3,800
TOTAL		11,306	761,082

AFRICA

	No. Of Bapt Unions	Churches	Members
Angola	3	175	66,460
Benin	1	40	3,000
Botswana	1	17	657
Burkino Faso	1	60	3 ,000
Burundi	1	87	32,000
Cameroon	3	1,263	172,061
CAR	1	136	40,800
Cote D'Ivoire	1	57	1,539
D R of Congo	5	1,244	720,159
Ethiopia	1	51	8,009
Ghana	1	684	60,000
Kenya	1	2,036	210,000
Liberia	1	229	60,000
Malawi	3	1,591	163,022
Mozambique	1	35	17,443
Namibia	1	49	3,500
Nigeria	2	5,394	1,040,667
Rwanda	2	191	310,756
Sierra Leone	1	97	6,356
South Africa	2	556	78,833
Tanzania	1	1,072	105,319
Togo	1	230	14,038
Uganda	1	566	20,626
Zambia	2	805	81,700
Zimbabwe	4	308	79,654
TOTAL		16,973	3,299,599

MIDDLE EAST

	No. of Bapt Unions	Churches	Members
Egypt	1	12	1,000
Israel	1	12	923
Jordan	1	12	1,000
Lebanon	1	19	1,114
Syrian Arab Republic	1	5	160
TOTAL		60	4,197

WORLD TOTAL

Churches	Members
159,034	42,377,260

Figures from BWA

TAKE 2

Take 2
a resource for church leaders & workers

RESOURCES *for leaders*

CAN'T BELIEVE IT

WOW!

IT'S AMAZING

WOW! Did you know that your children's group can belong to one of the most exciting world mission clubs around? The WOW club is for children aged between six and 12 years, and it opens up a "Window on the World" to encourage children to learn about God's work in the world in a fun and lively way.

For just £2.40 per child per year, each child in your group receives

- the full colour bi–monthly WOW magazine
- a club badge
- a 'freebie' map they complete themselves. Each WOW magazine will tell them what to stick on next.

The magazine is written especially for children. It is packed full of snippets of information about countries that BMS works in, life in other cultures and also focuses on issues such as food, transport and clothes. There are stories, cartoons, Bible based activities and competitions with brilliant prizes to be won.

There's also WOW Action Days which, if there is sufficient demand, we can arrange in your area or you can use the DIY manual to prepare one yourself. These use songs, activities, stories and a country focus to bring the message of Jesus home to the children. From our experience, WOW members like to bring their friends along to these fun events. WOW! A great opportunity to reach children who don't usually go to church.

Then there's the WOW fundraising project, which aims to educate as well as raise money for exciting work that BMS is involved with. Leaders of children's groups receive one copy of the project booklet in January. In the past children have raised sums of money for God's work beyond all expectations , and have had fun learning about different countries and lifestyles whilst they are doing it. It's also a great way to get your church involved. Look out for the new project available in January 1999.

Thousands of children belong to WOW already, so no matter what size your group is – why not get them excited about the work of world mission, and the important part they can play in it? **Call Rob Vaines in Resources at BMS (01235 517700) for WOW membership details.**

MAGAZINE WOW! MAGAZINE

The WAY I SEE IT

AN EXTRACT FROM THE REAL CORRESPONDENCE OF **PHILIP CLEMENTS–JEWERY**

DEAR JAN,

As this is the last contribution to ***mh*** that I will be making in this way, I wonder if for once the correspondence might be a real one. I would like to offer my own assessment of the whole series and the way it was conceived. Do you think the exercise has been successful overall? I must say that I have often felt too constrained by the brief you gave me, which was to put both sides of a controversial issue within a limit of 400 words or so. The correspondence format was my attempt to fulfil this brief, but I am not sure that it has really worked. Have you any comments to make?
Yours,

Philip

DEAR PHILIP,

I am sorry you felt constrained by the brief I gave you, but I am consistently told by all kinds of people that they and others won't read articles if there are too many words on the page – it just causes them to shut off and turn over! So I have to give all contributors a word count limit, and if they don't keep to it, I have to (metaphorically) apply the scissors. I also felt it was important that we looked at issues from more than one angle, because almost inevitably things can be a lot more complicated than at first perceived.
Yours,

Jan

DEAR JAN,

You are right about issues being complex. That is why 400 words are too few to make the discussion of an issue anything more than superficial. Another thing is that the sort of issues I have raised in my imaginary correspondence are matters that people feel strongly about, so a piece that tries to put both sides of the case can seem just a little too dispassionate. However, I am glad that what I have written over the past year has been provocative enough for some people to respond. You did publish some of these responses, but did you consider printing more of them so that the debate could have continued?
Yours,

Philip

DEAR PHILIP

Surely the fact that people wrote in about issues raised in your imaginary correspondence shows that feelings and emotions were stirred. As far as I can remember, it has been your column which has generated the most response from ***mh*** readers over the past year. As for publishing more letters – we fit in as many as we can, but then we've come full circle to the problem of space...
Yours,

Jan

Thanks to Philip for his real and imaginary correspondence over this past year. Ed.

What do you think? Take part in this debate. Write to us in about 120 words:
BMS, Baptist House, 129 Broadway, Didcot, Oxon, OX11 8XA or Email: herald@bms.org.uk

Action Card

Something to be valued

Pocket money is a precious thing. It gives us choice. Poor people have no choice. What money they have must be spent on necessities. Baiba and Zana now have a choice. Living in the poorest part of the city of Fortaleza, north-east Brazil, alongside the railway line, they have been encouraged to use their talents to produce multi-coloured greeting cards which are now on sale in the UK.

Last year a small co-operative began producing fortified food for local toddlers. Now another church-based co-operative is making cards from banana leaves and other local materials, (see picture).

A recent training class for making cards selected eight new operatives from a group of 24. They will produce enough per month to earn a minimum wage and will receive this before the cards are sold. The increased self-esteem acquired by the workers is as great a benefit as the money. Further, the work can be done from home and so mothers can look after their children at the same time.

Send this month's card with a Christmas greeting of hope and a 37p stamp and airmail sticker to:

Baiba and Zana, greeting card workers
c/o Linda Eaves
R. Prof. Fco. Gonçalves, 1400/703,Bl.2
Dionisio Torres, Fortaleza
CE 60.135-430 Brazil

If you wish to order these cards, they cost just £3.95 for four. See the back page of this *mh* magazine or phone Rob Vaines on 01235 517700.

Midlands Christian Resources Exhibition

BMS is going to be at the Midlands Christian Resources Exhibition, NEC, Birmingham, 11 to 14 November 1998. See you there!

Open 10 - 5 Wednesday to Friday, 9.30 - 3.00 Saturday

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Checkout

Missionary Movements

NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
Arrivals	**Arrivals**
Grace Penney from Kathmandu, Nepal	Helen Johnston from Amp Pipal, Nepal
Adrian and Sylvia Hopkins from Central African Republic	Katie Norris from Jumla, Nepal
Departures	**Departures**
John and Valerie Furmage to Paraná, Brazil	Peter and Valerie Harwood to Kathmandu, Nepal
John and Lidia Pullin to Campo Grande, Brazil	

The Last Word

GERRY MYHILL

Gerry Myhill is a BMS missionary working in Antonina, Brazil

Out visiting the river islands we happened by chance on a small group of houses built of thick bamboo stakes and thatched with palm leaves, the central house being by far the largest and around which were gathered a crowd of at least 200 people.

The boat was tied up and we soon discovered that a wedding was in progress, when a group came down to help us ashore, thinking that I was the musician arriving to play for their festivities.

When I said, "No", I wasn't the musician, but a missionary and that I had my Bible, not an accordion, they almost threw me back in the water!

As it turned out I stayed right through the festivities which were like something from another age. More people were arriving — including the musician — pigs were being butchered and roasted, people were dancing and all sorts of games were in progress.

I found a corner at the back of the shelter which formed the kitchen, and settled down to watch the action from a distance. It wasn't long, however, before I had a string of people coming to sit by me seeking guidance for a variety of problems. So the wedding turned into a real opportunity to present Jesus to many people.

Shortly after this event the house was destroyed by a flood and the owner, Sebastian, built an even bigger one on higher ground to house his very large family. It pleased me to receive an invitation to go out and hold a service of thanksgiving and to ask God's blessing on the new house. On this visit I was able to take a large group of church members and also invite the Christians from other islands — quite a change from the first visit when there had only been two of us.

The service was held and I am sure God used that meeting to bless many people.

> "... the message is always the same. 'Only Jesus saves' and with each soul saved, the darkness is driven a little further back".

However, to the casual observer the service would have seemed anything but a christian event, the strangest part being the closing prayers when we were gathered in a large circle inside the bamboo house.

It was almost dark apart from the flickering light from two paraffin lamps which threw grotesque shadows on the wall and thatch of the roof. A little old lady was running round us in rings waving a tin of fiercely smoking leaves and cow dung to keep away the clouds of mosquitoes. The mosquitoes didn't understand the nature of her mission, I'm sure, as they were being attacked with gusto. This meant that instead of holding hands in a circle for the prayer, most people were doing a sort of weird dance as they slapped about in an effort to defend themselves from the attentions of the insects.

Into the centre of this already-odd scene hopped an enormous toad, which sat and peered round at us, as if approving of the attention we appeared to be giving him.

The service was different, but the message is always the same. Only Jesus saves, and with each soul saved, the darkness is driven a little further back. ●

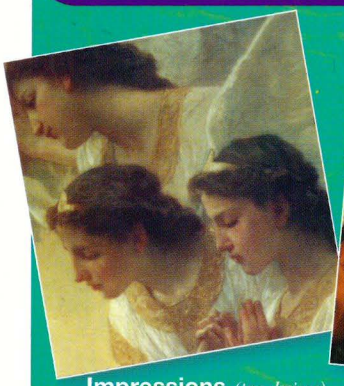
This is the last Last Word from Gerry. Thanks to him for his contributions to this page in 1998. Ed.

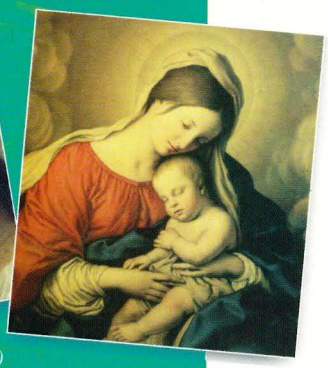
ILLUSTRATOIN BY SARAH PRENTICE

NEW *for* 1998

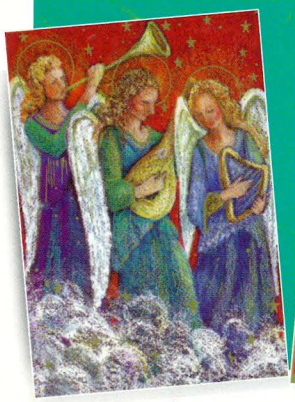
CHRISTMAS CARDS

This year we have even more Christmas cards to choose from.
Don't delay; put your order in today.
All cards contain Christian verses unless stated





Impressions *(two designs)*
135mm x 135mm **CC08 Impressions £2.50** *for 10*



Angels *(two designs)*
125mm x 180mm **CC07 Angels £2.50** *for 10*

Three Kings
125mm x 180mm (No verse)
CC06 Three Kings
£2.50 *for 10*

Fortaleza *(two designs)*
Hand-made using banana leaves by women from the Railway Favela, Fortaleza — a special income generating project set up by BMS missionary Linda Eaves. (Blank inside, with no verse)
104mm x 148mm **CC04 Fortaleza cards £3.95** *for 4*
exclusive to BMS

Calendars and Christmas Cards

Emmanuel & Glory *(two designs)*
103mm 147mm **CC05 Glory/Emmanuel £2.40** *for 10*

Peace
103mm x 207mm (No verse)
CC03 Peace £2.35 *for 8*

Joy to the world
103mm x 147mm
CC01 Joy to the world
£2.35 *for 8*

exclusive to BMS

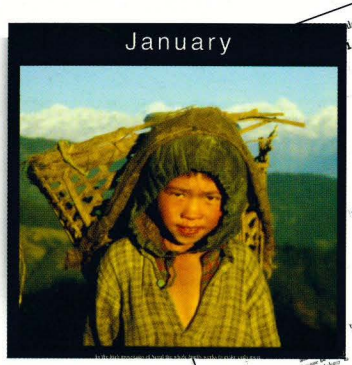
Silent Night
103mm x 205mm
CC02 Silent Night
£2.50 *for 10*

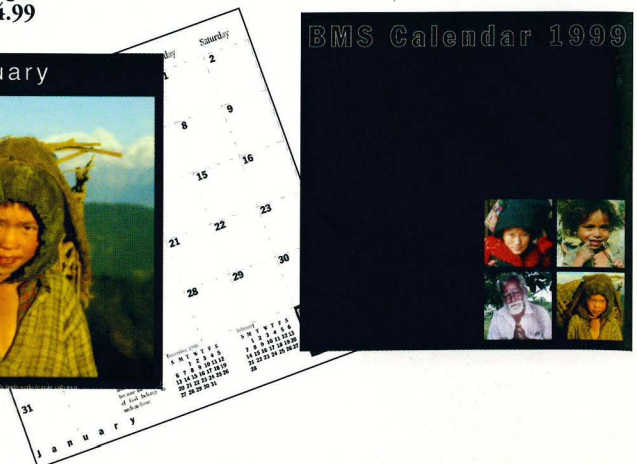
NEW *for* 1999 CALENDARS

You will find your order form inside *mh* magazine!

Engagement Calendar
Wall calendar with beautiful illustrations by Sarah Prentice.
Size 150mm x 370mm
Cal 2 Engagement Calendar
£2.99

Photographic Images
This calendar focuses on Justice and Peace issues the world over. Designed by Robert Seward.
Cal 1 Photographic Images
Size 300mm x 300mm **£4.99**





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